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OR PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF A JACOBITE'S DAUGHTER

BY

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MISTRESS BEATRICE COPE.

INTRODUCTION.

FAR away from any high-road, in the hill-country of Northumberland, stands an old Manor-house which is still called by the quaint name of 'Goodrest.'

The house is built of gray stone; and numerous windows filled with tiny panes of thick glass twinkle under the overhanging eaves. The rafters within are low and heavy, the chimneys enormous, the living-rooms spacious, the sleeping chambers little more than cells. The principal staircase is wide, and rich in carving; but there is an outside staircase, a flight of worn stone steps, steep and difficult to climb, which is more remarkable by far. These steps lead to a terrace-walk upon the roof, protected by a massive balustrade; and from this point of vantage a beautiful view is to be seen. On a clear day one

can gaze far away into Scotland; since Goodrest is situated scarce fifteen miles from the Scottish Border.

Anxious eyes have been strained to discern signs and tokens from this terrace-walk ere now; for Goodrest was not always the tranquil spot it now is. Once that sunny garden and those silent spacious rooms were the scene of sore anxiety, and of many trembling hopes and fears. But all this was a great while ago; and few beyond the immediate circle of the Templar family knew the tale which lends a pathetic interest to the stone staircase, and the fair prospect its higher steps command.

The long corridor at Goodrest is lined with oil-paintings of former generations of Templars—pale stiff ladies holding roses in their hands, and wearing pearl necklaces; and stern heroes with high cheek-bones and gaunt features. The Templars as a race were not remarkable for personal beauty, one would say; and their likenesses are by no means interesting. Yet there is a picture, somewhat out of place, seemingly, among the row of family portraits, which fascinates the most careless observer strangely—the picture of a young girl.

It is painted upon a very dark and shadowy background, from which the face and some soft folds of white drapery stand out with a weird unearthly light.

The picture must be a good one, if only for the intensity of expression which the painter has thrown into the youthful face, and the vivid, almost transparent brightness of its pallor. The figure seems to be pausing at the head of a flight of stone stairs, one foot advanced to descend; one delicate hand draws a floating scarf of muslin close, while the other rests upon the balustrade. The head is turned partly aside, as with a fearful timid movement; the eyes, dark gray in colour, and somewhat dilated with terror or apprehension, gaze out of the picture with an eager listening look.

This portrait, unlike most of the others, bears no date; but the name is cut deep into the massive frame. Not the family name of Templar; a strange name, nowhere else repeated in the old house:

'MISTRESS BEATRICE COPE.'

And here the impersonation of this young trembling creature, depicted by some unknown artist at what must have been the very crisis of her life, has stood for many years, in the midst of the insipid ladies and frowning gentlemen who are paint and canvas, and nothing more. She has no pearl necklace, and no rose—no simpering prettily composed features—no date of birth, marriage, and death, to indicate a well-filled duly completed life. She is just 'Mistress

Beatrice Cope,'—a graceful shape, a terrified girlish face, and a throbbing heart which once beat so wildly that imagination can still call back the sound of breathless palpitation in the hush of the dusk hour near that picture frame.

There is no record of her in the Templar papers; but the outline of her story lingers, fragrant with the sweetness of unselfish love and high romantic courage, among the traditionary lore of that fair Goodrest in the hills.

CHAPTER I.

BEATRICE COPE was the daughter of one who suffered death for the Jacobite cause. Mr. Charles Cope, her father, had not fallen on any battle-field, but had suffered the far more terrible doom of a traitor to the existing Government, on Tower Hill, one dark wintry morning late in the reign of William of Orange.

Beatrice's infancy and early childhood were passed in the midst of plots for the restoration of the exiled dynasty, of wild hopes, and no less wild despairs. She lived under the charge of her father's sister, the widowed Lady Dalrymple, during these first years of her life, in a dull, retired house with dormer windows, which stood in the corner of a walled courtyard in the city of London.

A melancholy residence this was, having the indefinable look of a house whose inhabitants are in hiding, or under a cloud; but it was 'home' to little Beatrice Cope, and its melancholy did not oppress

her. She was a piece of brightness amongst these people whose hopes were beginning to fail on all hands; her ringing childish laughter was like music in her aunt's sad house, where hushed voices and stillness reigned. Every one petted and caressed her; and she knew nothing of calamity, sorrow, and loss, although these trials had gone on around her from her cradle, filling the lives of those who loved her best. Nothing—until, late one afternoon in January, Mr. Sandiland, her father's friend, who had access to him in his prison, took her there, that he might see her for the last time.

Very faint and confused were Beatrice's after-memories of this, though she was five years old then, and a bright intelligent child. Surely it is in mercy that the painful memories of childhood often grow dim, while happier ones stand out clear and fresh to the last. At any rate, although Beatrice remembered the happiness and indulgence which went before, and the encompassing love of this dear father, 'twas only by a great effort that she could ever recall the last scenes of her life in London-town.

Sometimes, however, by closing her eyes and thinking deeply, she could see the London streets again, looking very dreary in a thick drizzling rain which came on at dusk that January afternoon long ago. She could see the hurrying throngs, and hear

the roar of the ceaseless traffic; and could discern the awful Tower of London looming black out of the white mist which rose up from the Thames and shrouded it in vapour. Then she could recall a narrow apartment enclosed within singularly massive walls, where all was very still, and where two gentlemen—her father and Mr. Sandiland—were engaged with writing materials and parchments.

She did not know how long they were thus engaged, but she knew that her father held her on his knee, nestling in his arms; and she thought she must have fallen asleep in the dim light and the quietness. When she awoke, the room was nearly dark, and the writing was finished: a man was bringing in candles. The atmosphere was foggy and chilly, as though the mist crept in through the barred window; the candles, Beatrice remembered, looked each like a dull red sun encircled by haze, to the bewildered childish vision.

She recollected that her father spoke to her, caressing and soothing her; and so she supposed she must have waked up frightened, as children do in a strange place. Then, sounding out of the far-away years, Beatrice Cope, a woman grown, could hear words which had fallen uncomprehended upon the ears of the child Beatrice long ago.

'I leave my honour safe in your hands, Sandiland.

Commend me to his Majesty, I pray you, with all loyal greeting. Say to him that my last thoughts and prayers were for the Cause. . . . . Is there aught left unsaid? Nay, I think not. You know my will respecting this child; persuade Marjorie to see that I have arranged for the best. My thoughts are confused; this close air gives the headache, does it not?—but that will pass speedily, with all other things. . . . . Our conference is well-nigh ended: say me thy evening hymn, my child!'

Beatrice often thought upon those words, after she came to an age to understand them. She could hear the low grave tones in which they were spoken, vibrating in her heart still; and could hear her own childish voice repeating lines written by the good Bishop Ken:

> 'Teach me to live, that I may dread
> The grave as little as my bed;
> Teach me to die, that so I may
> Rise glorious at the awful Day.'

These were the words her lips repeated then, very reverently as she had been taught to say them, yet all unconscious of their deep significance—all unaware, poor child, that the arms which held her close were those of a dying man. That some great calamity was at hand, filling the air with its black shadow, she knew well; of its nature she had no

conception—so at least the case appeared to her, in thinking of this time afterwards. She remembered that her father listened with bowed head; and that he said 'Amen' very solemnly when the Doxology ended.

Then, after a pause, he put back the hair from her forehead, and looked long and intently into her face.

'Kiss me, Beatrice,' he said. 'The hour grows late.'

After this point her memory always failed somewhat. She fancied that the face her warm lips kissed was very cold; but her father spoke on in his customary tone and manner, to her and to Mr. Sandiland, whose hands were shaking curiously as he gathered up the scattered papers. Then Mr. Cope asked, almost impatiently—

'Is it time?'

And, as his friend bent his head stiffly in assent, he rose from his seat, and himself put together the remaining papers carefully.

What words were those which Beatrice the woman thought that Beatrice the child must have heard, spoken low while the papers rustled?

'I beseech you, do not let her after-life be haunted by a terrible memory?'

Then came a faint recollection of an opened door—

a husky voice outside beginning to mutter a few words—her father's voice replying—

'Yes, yes; we are ready,'—his hand meeting his friend's hand in a long straining clasp.

Little did the child imagine what that parting meant; that that farewell must reach across Time even to Eternity.

CHAPTER II.

BEATRICE remembered that the streets were very noisy as the hackney coach rolled through them that evening. The damp air resounded with the hoarse cries of news-vendors, selling their broadsheets under flaring oil-lamps, and deafening the passers-by with strange shoutings about the Jacobite traitor and Tower Hill.

'What are they calling out so loud?' little Beatrice asked, peering from the coach window with eager curiosity; but Mr. Sandiland drew her to him, and wrapped her hood closer round her head.

'Hush, my child—hush,' he said, with a groan.

Beatrice had a bewildered recollection of that night as a very unrestful one. She fancied that no one went to bed or slept in the old house, except herself; and that black figures passed and repassed her nursery door all night long, flitting noiselessly up and down the wide staircase. Once she thought that Aunt Marjorie, a tall, shadowy woman with an

agonized face, stood for a few minutes by the little bed, wringing her hands silently. But Beatrice never felt sure that this visitation might not have been the imagination of a dream.

The room was still dark when some one came to wake her, in the middle of the night as she supposed, though subsequently she knew it to have been soon after four o'clock in the morning. She was dressed in a new black frock, and taken down-stairs at once, along a stone passage where lights were burning at intervals, and whence the sound of distant chanting could be heard. Often in dreams Beatrice saw this gloomy passage, and herself, a small creature with frightened eyes, passing swiftly along it, holding the gown of Mrs. Hawker, Aunt Marjorie's waiting-woman. Then a door at the end was pushed open, revealing a flight of stone steps leading down into the Chapel.

Beatrice knew in her heart that this was the Chapel—she had been in it every day; but it looked altered, and mysterious, and terrible, so that she clutched Mrs. Hawker's gown tighter, with a little gasp. The Chapel was underground, with a vaulted roof and massive pillars. The lights burnt low in their sconces; the altar, which Beatrice was accustomed to see bright and glittering, was covered with black and surrounded by black hangings. Even the

golden Cross above shone through a mist of crape; and the gloomy folds seemed to vibrate to the wail of the Penitential Psalms.

Years afterwards Beatrice Cope could never hear that wailing cadence—that awful chant of the 'De Profundis,'—without thrilling through and through with sudden remembrance of her childhood's first confused terror and distress.

Mrs. Hawker led her charge to some prie-dieu chairs at the foot of the chancel steps, and whispering to her to kneel down by Lady Dalrymple, and to be very quiet, drew back to a place behind her mistress. And the music and chanting went on and on, rising and falling, beseeching, mourning, lamenting with a terrible lamentation; and the child knelt as she was told, with a great sense of blackness and desolation all about her, wondering in her heart what this misery meant.

At last came silence. Even the notes of the organ died away. The voices ceased their solemn supplication 'out of the deep'; and all was still.

A great clock far off upon some church steeple struck six slowly and distinctly, with deep booming strokes.

Then Aunt Marjorie, who had no chair before her, sank forward almost prostrate upon the chancel

steps, with long sighing sobs, her arms stretched out, and her hands clasped.

This interval was very fearful to the child; sobs and tears were all around her, and close at hand poor Aunt Marjorie's agony of tearless weeping. Beatrice did not cry herself; she could not, being only numb and bewildered; but she knew afterwards that during the long silence her father's soul had passed by a fearful road, and the terrible vigil in the Tower ended then—at last.

After a time the chanting began again; but the words were not those of any penitential psalm. They were uttered very softly and distinctly; the music and the voices seemed to little Beatrice to come from a long way off.

'I Am the Resurrection and the Life' . . . . The holy words of strength and comfort fell upon Aunt Marjorie's bruised and fevered heart like dew, and quieted the little child's trembling.

Only for awhile—the full swell of the voices in unison soon brought back the tremor; and Beatrice could remember no more in the after-time.

She did not know how long she knelt there in her place, feeling as though an icy wind were blowing upon her, while the lights went out in darkness one by one.

At last all grew dark to her, and even the

sensation of exceeding cold was lost. A long night seemed to have passed away before she opened her eyes again, and gazed around in frightened misery. She was not in the Chapel then, but in the vast chilly hall, where a small brazier of charcoal was burning, casting a red glow into the dimness.

Aunt Marjorie's waiting-women were clustering about her, chafing her hands and her temples, with low-spoken words of pity and comment upon their lady's strange lack of judgment concerning a tender little child. Beatrice did not distinguish their words; but the opening of the outer door caught her ears immediately, and she saw Mr. Sandiland enter, muffled up as one who seeks to disguise himself, very colourless, and moving like a man who walks in his sleep. With a little cry she tried to dart towards him, though everything seemed to go round with her as she moved. He was connected in her mind with her father; he might go to him whenever he would, she imagined. Doubtless he could tell her what all this mysterious wretchedness meant.

Mr. Sandiland looked down at her amazed, with dazzled eyes which could see nothing clearly for one terrible sight which was ever present to them, blotting out all else.

'What has been done?' he asked abruptly, turning to the women.

'My lady gave orders, sir,' said Mrs. Hawker.

She would have explained further; but Mr. Sandiland signed to her to be silent, and, stooping down, lifted the little trembling thing in his arms.

'My darling, they rest well that rest in GOD,' he said, his voice almost sunk away. 'Do not be terrified. Thy dear father is with Him.'

'They rest well that rest in GOD!'

CHAPTER III.

BEATRICE often thought upon these words when, in after-years, she could comprehend in some degree from what agony of mind, what wrenching asunder of earthly ties, what overwhelming pressure of anxiety and conscientious scruple, her father, in the prime of his manhood, 'rested'; when out of her own experience she understood from how stern a conflict that rest gave him discharge.

Truly those were terrible days for a man in whom all tender human affections were strong—in whom loyalty to the exiled King could not obliterate personal attachments and anxieties. Mr. Cope had done his work well, to the utmost of his ability. He had been loyal and faithful; he had perilled his life, not grudging the sacrifice; but he had done all this in no spirit of light-hearted daring and confidence, such as animated many of his friends. He had worked and intrigued with a heavy heart, thinking much of his little motherless daughter, and

of the chances which the future might hold for her; of his widowed sister also, whose husband had lost his life in this same disastrous Cause which might any day claim that of her brother too. And during the last weeks of his life, when that which he had long expected overtook him, his chief anxiety was to secure Beatrice from the troubles of the times.

His sister's judgment was, he knew, unsettled by sorrow and apprehension to a degree which must render her an unfit guardian for any child; and therefore his confidence was placed in his friend, Mr. Roger Sandiland, who had been very staunch to him through many perils. To this tried friend he committed the future of his daughter, speaking earnestly of his desire that her life should be happy and sheltered. With him he arranged that Beatrice should be transferred from Lady Dalrymple's care to that of her maternal grandmother, Madam Hunter—provided Madam Hunter could be prevailed upon to accept the charge.

'Thus her childhood will be secure, at all events; and when she comes to years of discretion she may choose her part,' the poor father said, during the dusk of that last evening while the child slept in his arms. 'I cannot but desire that my daughter should, in heart, choose the Cause for which I die; yet, Heaven

help me! I greatly crave a happy lot in this world for the little one. I would fain think that these perilous matters concern not women; but I commend all to your judgment, and to your mercy likewise, true friend. Do not break her peace, if so doing can be avoided—do not call upon her for aught of service. Let my work and my suffering count for both.'

'All will surely be adjusted long ere the child grow up,' said the other, who was more sanguine.

Mr. Cope shook his head.

'Not so, I think,' he answered, with a sigh; and then he put aside his earthly cares as far as human weakness would let him, and spoke of the child's future no more.

In due course Mr. Sandiland made arrangements for the transfer of the orphan to that new keeping which her father had desired for her. Madam Hunter resided with her son, the present head of the family, at his house of Crowe Hall in the county of Northumberland; and the old lady replied by the hand of 'Squire Hunter' to the letter addressed to her respecting Beatrice Cope.

Mr. Hunter wrote coldly, but expressed willingness to receive his niece under his roof. His mother, he said, was too far advanced in age and infirmity to be troubled with the upbringing of a young girl. He

and his wife would therefore make themselves responsible for the maintenance and education of Mistress Beatrice Cope, trusting to find in her the same obedience and docility which their own daughters did not fail to manifest.

The honest Squire was no finished penman, and his written words were few, though sensible and mightily to the purpose. He was on the Whig side of politics, and regarded all Jacobites with strong aversion. Such being the case, his house was by no means the home Roger Sandiland would have chosen as advantageous for the child, had not her father's directions been very explicit; but the instructions left were so clear that he had no choice save to carry them out. His hardest task was to convince Lady Dalrymple that thus it must be.

She was childless as well as widowed; and to have her brother's daughter torn from her care broke her heart afresh, she said. At last, however, all was settled; and through the bitter weather of early spring Roger Sandiland travelled with his charge on the long northward road.

In those bygone days that journey from London to the far north was no trifle, to be lightly undertaken, even in March; for although the days were lengthening, the cold was strengthening, as the old proverb has it; and risk of snow was still imminent.

The weeks spent in travelling seemed like a curious lifetime to Beatrice Cope. Journeying on and on along frost-bound roads from dawn till after dusk; stopping at cosy wayside inns, where there was always a great glow of firelight and a fragrance of some savoury cooking; seeing the horses put to and taken out; picking up fresh passengers and parting from others—these and similar incidents of the way afforded endless entertainment to the child, when she was not very cold, or very tired and sleepy.

She was much noticed and petted, each kind heart being touched by the sight of the sweet fresh little face, framed by the heavy beaver bonnet with its large knot of crape; and speculation was rife in many a hostelry as to what the history of this tiny lady might be.

But no one ventured on any friendly advances towards the gloomy gentleman her companion, who sat with his hat drawn over his brows, and his eyes for the most part closed, taking no heed of the overtures made to the child.

Beatrice was happy enough under this state of things all day; yet when twilight came on she would creep closer to Mr. Sandiland and cry quietly, oppressed by some over-shadowing of remembrance —some dim perplexed understanding of her own fórlorn lot.

At last the journey ended; and the old Manor-house in the distant north country was reached. Speech grew broader and manners rougher as the travellers approached their bourne; but hearts were kind as ever, or perhaps kinder.

And at Crowe Hall, near the hamlet of Thistle-thwayte, in a plainly furnished room called the White Parlour, Madam Hunter sat alone, with a grave face and a troubled heart. She was thinking much of her dead daughter, in the silence of that March evening, while the fire burnt clear and bright. Lucy Hunter's marriage had been a sorrow, her death a heart-break; and the old griefs fluttered again in her mother's heart, as she sat listening for the sound of wheels.

Her knitting was for once laid aside: she sat unemployed, her hands clasped upon the carved handle of her ebony walking-stick, her firm chin resting upon the fingers thus mechanically pressed together. And before her eyes passed visions of Lucy as a baby —Lucy as a girl—Lucy as a bride; and all the while she strained her ears to catch the first sound which should herald the coming of Lucy's child.

She quite forgot the son-in-law whom she had never loved, in thinking thus of his wife; she expected to see as it were a second Lucy come springing into the White Parlour, and she prepared her

heart to meet a joy which would be more than half pain at first.

Presently Squire Hunter joined his mother in her solitary watch of expectation; but the two scarcely spoke three words to each other. The Squire had memories of his own which held him silent, as he leaned against the high mantelpiece of Dutch carving, a stalwart figure in snuff-coloured clothes, lace ruffles, and tall riding-boots.

Then the long-expected crunching of wheels was faintly heard, succeeded by the heavy trot of weary horses, passing beneath the trees of the avenue. A moment later a travelling-carriage passed the windows; and Madam Hunter's strong old heart began to labour, and beat with an irregular force. She rose up with an effort, for her limbs were somewhat stiff; and steadied herself upon her stick, as the serving-man, who had grown gray at Crowe Hall and remembered 'Mistress Lucy' well, threw the door wide to admit the newly-arrived travellers.

A gentleman entered; and at his side, holding his hand fast as though seeking protection which had never yet failed, came a little girl in deep mourning. But where was the bright face, the fair curls tinged with gold, and the laughing blue eyes, upon which Madam Hunter had longed to look?—This pale little creature, with her garb of woe, and her dark

colouring—the gray eyes already filling with tears, the sensitive mouth already beginning to tremble—could this be Lucy's child?

No vision of that dearest daughter rose up before Madam Hunter in the White Parlour then; only the face of Charles Cope, which had never been pleasing to her, gained fresh vividness in her memory. Her heart gave one throb, and then resumed its ordinary pulsations. Her face was calm and her voice cold, as she addressed Mr. Sandiland with courteous thanks.

'You have had much trouble, sir, I fear,' she said, 'in bringing me my little grand-daughter.'

Roger Sandiland was not a very ready man, in trivial matters; and his mind just then was absorbed.

'Madam,' he answered, bowing courteously enough, however, 'I would count no trouble much which could serve my friend or my friend's child. Mr. Cope was the dearest friend I had; and his last wishes are very sacred to me. He earnestly desired that I should bring Beatrice to you.'

'I am indebted to my son-in-law for his remembrance, although you, sir, disclaim thanks from me. Come hither, child,' said Madam Hunter, with a sudden contraction of the brow, as the master of the house stepped forward to greet the stranger in his turn.

Beatrice advanced at this summons, and made the

deep curtsey which the manners of the time required. Her grandmother laid a hand on either shoulder, and looked earnestly into the face of the little girl before her. But in a moment the hands fell and the look was averted, as though in disappointment; and Beatrice shrank back to Mr. Sandiland, not heeding or even noticing her uncle's outstretched arm.

'She is a docile child, madam,' the Jacobite gentleman said, looking gravely down at the face of his recent charge, now half-hidden against his sleeve.

'I trust to find her so, sir,' said the old lady.

'And one of quick parts,' he continued, with a touch of almost parental pride. 'Somewhat of the finely-tempered keenness of apprehension which distinguished her father has descended upon her.'

'In respect of that likeness she is doubtless fortunate.'

'Yes,' he said, noting no double meaning. 'She learns quickly, and has a prodigious memory.'

'Is that last-mentioned characteristic considered an advantage?'

'Surely, madam; I imagined that it would be so reckoned.'

'In some cases, without doubt; in this, to be plain with you, sir—I know not.—May I request your attention for an instant? I have that to say which may prove displeasing; but I intend no

offence. Therefore I will put what must needs be said into the fewest words possible, craving beforehand your charitable construction of my bluntness. I intend to do my best for my grand-daughter, in every respect. My son, and my son's wife, will aid me in my task. From them I shall receive all the help I need.—Do I make myself plain, sir?—I desire to admit no further communication with her late father's family and friends, concerning this child. By Mr. Cope's own act and deed, for good or for evil, she belongs entirely to her mother's family now. Her mother's family accept the responsibility of her future; but they must be allowed to do so on their own terms.—I pray you to make this known, with all courtesy, to Lady Dalrymple.'

Mr. Sandiland bowed once more, in grave and silent acquiescence. Then he delivered into Madam Hunter's hand a few lines, written in the Tower of London by one whose hours were numbered; and the lady's proud calm face paled somewhat, as she took the piece of paper thus offered. First she looked at the superscription, and then she looked once more at the child; and as she gazed she sighed heavily to herself, as one who feels the breath oppressed.

'There has been much misery in this England of ours, sir,' she said, at length. 'God keep the right, and grant us settled days!'

To a prayer thus worded, Roger Sandiland could say 'Amen'; but he took his leave speedily, declining Squire Hunter's offers of rest and hospitality.

Here was no place of refreshment for him; and he would gladly have taken his friend's child away with him, to commit her to the care of those loyal ladies beyond the seas, who would love and cherish her for her dead father's sake. But this could not be, now. Wherefore he made his bow to Madam Hunter in the White Parlour, and to Squire Hunter on the doorstep beneath the carven coat-of-arms; and Beatrice clung to her protector and cried, so that he had to tear himself gently away from the little clasping hands. . . . The house-door closed upon the Jacobite gentleman with a dull heavy sound; and Beatrice Cope was left to make her first essay in a totally new existence, amongst strange faces.

Mr. Sandiland dismissed the clumsy coach at the first village change-house; and, after amply contenting the postilions with money, ordered a frugal meal for himself, which, however, he scarcely touched. Then he spoke with the landlord as soon as the place was quiet; and ascertained that he could hire a horse to carry himself and his valise across the hills when the shadows of night fell.

Roger Sandiland must have known the country well, for he rode by bridle-paths and by-lanes in the

gathering dusk, seldom looking to right hand or to left, but directing the course of his horse with unswerving accuracy. As he reached the crest of a hill, the moon rose clear over the valley; and then he did check bridle an instant, looking for some landmark which he expected to see. Three tall poplar-trees standing together in a south-easterly direction gave him the clue he wanted. He turned his horse's head towards them, riding over much rugged ground, and down a very precipitous lane, more like the channel of a brook than a path for man or horse.

Near the poplar-trees before mentioned the lane took a sudden curve; and here, by broad daylight, one might have observed that the neglect of the road seemed somewhat artificial, and existed rather in appearance than in reality. The lane wound steeply up among the hills, overhung by green holly-bushes interlaced with ivy, and wild-rose briars now bare of leaves. And presently a small porter's lodge, nestling modestly under dark fir-trees, showed that some house of importance was near at hand.

Roger Sandiland had made a considerable circuit, and had returned to within seven miles of Crowe Hall. The old porter at the gate peered anxiously into the dimness, asking timidly who knocked so late.

'One who travels by the sign,' was the answer: and at once the heavy bars slid back, and the ponderous gate turned upon hinges too carefully oiled to be noisy.

'Eh, sir, we have had many a scare i' these parts,' the porter said, holding up his lanthorn so that the light might fall upon Mr. Sandiland's face. 'And what make you so far to the north'ard, Master Roger? The air o' the south be a sight better for your health, I'm thinking.'

'Maybe it is, Job Eccles,' said Mr. Sandiland, quietly. 'My health, however, is somewhat precarious in all parts of England just now. There is not much to choose, as to that; and I have business in the north.—How are all at the house, Job?—I will ride on softly. I can announce myself.'

He did ride on, almost before Job's reply was ended; and soon left the dark fir-trees behind, coming upon peaceful Goodrest set in the heart of its fair apple-orchards and meadows.

Goodrest at this time bore somewhat the character of a religious house. A nonjuring clergyman had found shelter there some years previously, and had gathered about him sundry priests and deacons of the English Church, to whom the new oaths of allegiance presented insuperable difficulties. In the small church covered with ivy, which stood within

the park, prayers and psalms were said at each of the Canonical Hours, while the daily offices of Matins and Evensong were duly attended by the whole household. Ladies resided at Goodrest, dividing their time between the exercises of religion and such spiritual and corporeal works of mercy as were possible in that retired spot.

They prayed, they fasted, they kept long vigils; they wrought much delicate embroidery and some fine lace; they distilled medicaments, and made curious conserves. Two or three times in a year, the medicines, the preserves, and the lace and embroidery, were taken away from Goodrest very privately, and sold to such advantage as might be by a trusted agent.

Thus the little community maintained itself, after a frugal sort, even sending rouleaux of gold pieces across the sea to be dedicated to that service for which Charles Cope, and many another like minded, had resigned life.

The real head of the house of Goodrest had small share in the prayers, the alms-deeds, or the simple industries of this portion of its inhabitants. Mr. Templar was deeply involved in political intrigue, and kept up constant correspondence with St. Germains. He was a kinsman of Roger Sandiland; and Roger Sandiland, together with other gentlemen

much engaged in matters touching the Stuart succession, came and went at Goodrest perpetually.

Mr. Templar was a marked man; and but for a certain toleration and half-acknowledged protection extended to him by Mr. Hunter of Crowe Hall, and a brother-magistrate in whose mind the ties of old neighbourhood had also weight, his position at Goodrest must have been exceedingly insecure.

As things were, Mr. Templar had received a lucid hint from the authorities that he would do well to reside elsewhere; and a transparent fiction to the effect that he lived abroad was current among his neighbours, and received ostensible credence. He did not hunt with the hounds, it is true, or appear at fairs and places of public resort. But he might be met with towards dusk in lonely spots, riding sedately upon his stout gray galloway, and often accompanied by one or more of those who 'travelled by the sign' —*i. e.* the sign of the three poplars, which indicated the private road to Goodrest.

Mr. Hunter of Crowe Hall was always careful not to observe Mr. Templar of Goodrest at any inopportune moment of meeting; and as to the companions of the latter gentleman, Mr. Hunter never by any chance knew them again. Mr. Hunter was a kindly man, who thought much forbearance due from a Hunter to a Templar.

The Hunters had scarcely held Crowe Hall longer than the Templars had held Goodrest. There had been an intermarriage between the families too, three generations back. So, although Mr. Hunter considered the present representative of the Templars a wrong-headed and mischievous individual, quite unable to see daylight at noonday, he was anxious to avoid compromising his safety by any animadversions upon his conduct or opinions. Mr. Hunter tried to forget Goodrest, and all the plotting and scheming which went on there. And indeed Goodrest was easily forgotten and overlooked. The paths which led to it, led nowhere else; and whatever harm Mr. Templar might do elsewhere, he kept himself very quiet in his own neighbourhood. As to the clergy, and the religious women whom some called 'Sisters,' no charge could be brought against them, save that they were sheltered under Mr. Templar's roof, and prayed for a discrowned and exiled King.

Roger Sandiland was quite at home at Goodrest, and regulated his comings and goings as he would. But when he arrived there after leaving little Beatrice Cope in the care of her relations, his kinsman looked upon him with a troubled brow, and explained the meaning of Job Eccles' hinted caution.

'The full history of Charles Cope's end is known, hereabouts,' he said. 'His connection with Mr.

Hunter insures much talk on the subject. It is known that you were with him at the last; 'tis said, moreover, that you had a hand in all which went before. Therefore I endorse Job's recommendation, Roger. The air of the south is best for you; and I cannot imagine why you thought proper to draw attention upon Goodrest, by travelling north at this precise juncture.'

Mr. Templar did not speak angrily, but rather with the weary displeasure of one with whom all things go amiss. A glance might show that he was an unsuccessful man, in whose hands no scheme prospered. Perhaps an inherent want of hopefulness had something to do with this. Mr. Templar saw difficulties so clearly that whoever worked with him must infallibly suffer some discouragement.

'I was compelled to go north,' said Mr. Sandiland, in quiet excuse.

'Ah, on account of poor Cope's child? But another man, Roger, would have conveyed her to her relations by other means.—However, you did as you thought best. 'Tis a thousand pities Charles Cope lost nerve concerning her at the last. Nevertheless, we have the boy: the girl matters to us little, by comparison. I hear from St. Germains that young Cope is a fine lad, and a favourite companion of His Royal Highness the Prince. He

may be serviceable to the Cause, ere many years slip by.'

'His sister may be serviceable also,' said Roger Sandiland, who had now recognized with grief of heart that the triumph to which he looked forward would not come speedily. 'She too is ours, Templar. Could a daughter of Charles Cope turn Whig and Hanoverian at heart? He desired for her a tranquil childhood and a happy youth. Well, she may enjoy both, and yet be ready when our time comes. When we strike next, we strike surely, once and for all.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE first days spent at Crowe Hall were not happy ones to Beatrice Cope. Madam Hunter's stately dignity chilled and repelled the child thus suddenly cut adrift from all familiar stays. The beautiful austere old lady felt an impatience of the little girl's grief and seeming waywardness; and in her heart lurked a sense of disappointment strong and keen.

'Anna,' Madam Hunter said to her daughter-in-law, 'I am old to deal with children, and this child is like to be a sore trial to me. 'Tis a little muling puking thing, with no more resemblance to our Lucy than a hedge-sparrow bears to a dragon-fly. One must carry one's burden, be it early in life or be it late: but there come moments when I could wish that my son-in-law's gracious remembrance of the ancient dame at Crowe Hall had tarried a brief space longer upon the road. Time was short with him, I find, when he thought upon

this house as a refuge for the little girl. My son-in-law? Daughter Anna, 'tis but a few short weeks agone that Farmer Martin sent up a London Newsletter which he purchased at the horse-fair, with his respectful duty to me; for the man is ever attentive, and knows that I love to read the news. And in the ill-written columns of that Newsletter, I read details of a dark and secret plot. I said then that I for one could not desire to stay the headman's axe. As men have sown, I said, so must they reap; we have Scripture warranty for that, Anna. And sure they merit the sentence of death, who would again seek to plunge this unhappy country into the discord and tumult of civil strife. . . . . I little thought then that the blood of Lucy's husband had flowed forth upon that scaffold; and that our name and her memory were in some sort dishonoured there. My son-in-law! my Lucy's husband!—that he should so act, and so die! 'Tis bitter, and hard to bear.'

'Nay, mother,' said Squire Hunter, who sat by with the air of one not enjoying the colloquy: 'there is no dishonour in the case. To be sure—an attainted traitor—that sounds ill: yet much of the best blood in England is or has been in the same quandary. I defend not Cope's principles, political or otherwise; but he has paid the penalty, poor fellow, and what can man do more? Let the dead

rest, say I. And as for this little hop-o'-my-thumb Beatrice, we can mould and train her as we please, and find her a good husband by and by; one well affected to the Protestant succession, with never a glance over his shoulder towards Pope or Pretender either.'

'Son Maurice,' said Madam Hunter, 'hast never heard a certain proverb which says that what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh? The child resembles her father; who shall resolve us how far that resemblance may extend? 'Tis mighty well to say we can mould and train her as we please; but yonder gentleman whose heart was bound to Charles Cope was good enough to assure me, for my comfort and information, that she has a prodigious memory. I warrant me he has done his best to foster it.'

'His tutorship has ended speedily,' Mr. Hunter said, 'and the little maid is but five or six years old after all, mother. Had we charge of her brother, now, instead of herself, we might well discern rocks ahead.'

Madam Hunter paid scant attention to her son's reassuring words. She turned her eyes to the face of her daughter-in-law, who answered the silent appeal with the decision proper to the mother of seven bonny lads and lasses.

'Beatrice needs only to live as a child among other children,' young Madam Hunter said. 'Thus past memories will be effaced by natural pleasures and interests; and her megrims and fancies will wear out also, as her health strengthens. 'Tis ill for a child to be mewed up with grown people, and to witness their sorrow. No wonder this one looks like a plant reared in the shade.'

'She takes finely to our Bessie, though,' said the hearty Squire, 'and that is a hopeful sign, mother. Do not you disturb yourself, madam; leave poor Lucy's child to Anna for awhile, and let the future take care of itself. I must go couple up the dogs.'

And Squire Hunter strode cheerfully from the room.

Beatrice Cope did indeed look a white and woeful little creature at this time. During the first days of her residence at Crowe Hall she did little but cry, suffering misery from that sense of strangeness and forlornness which often attacks a child with overwhelming force. She cried, therefore; until her aunt, a firm though motherly woman, told her that they should not be able to love her as they intended and wished to do, if that continued. This was not very tender comforting, but it answered well; for Beatrice always had been loved during her little life, and hungered for love now in a way which

would have seemed strange to the prosaic aunt, had the craving been explained to her. And ere long Beatrice found her place in the busy country-house, which appeared to her so perplexingly full of children. The tearful face soon brightened when Bessie Hunter, a little maiden with soft blue eyes and an apple-blossom complexion, came and looked at the cousin in black, in a mild and wondering fashion. At Beatrice's first wavering smile, Bessie's face dimpled into smiles also; and she thrust a wooden doll into Beatrice's hand, as a pledge of amity. When Beatrice cried bitterly at bedtime, for Aunt Marjorie and Mrs. Hawker, and for the dear father who could never come to her again, generous little Bessie kissed and comforted her, and promised her a lovely purring kitten 'for her very own.' This kitten was the darling of Bessie's heart, and the offer of such a gift meant a great deal.

Very soon a happier period began for Beatrice Cope. Before many weeks went by the bracing air, the wholesome regularity of life, and, above all, the cheering companionship of other children, brought colour to the pale cheeks and restored tone to the shaken nerves. Her uncle and aunt and cousins were all kind to her, though they made small account of the little addition to their

circle whose unimportant personality cost old Madam Hunter many an anxious thought.

Beatrice's sayings and doings were no longer watched, and commented upon, and wondered at, as had been the case in London. An only child is a marvel—a special treasure; when one has a flock around one, the study of each individual naturally becomes less minute.

Beatrice Cope paired with Bessie, the little cousin a few months older than herself, who had won her heart at first sight. These two trotted about together all day long, were sent to bed at the same time, and had their plays and interests and even their punishments pretty much in common. Of the punishments Beatrice was apt to receive rather the larger share, for her spirit was more adventurous than Bessie's; also she was not accustomed to the rules she now lived under, and did not always understand what was lawful and what was forbidden. But it was not young Madam Hunter's method to punish overmuch, so that even this did not fall heavily upon the child.

Little Beatrice did not know over what old feuds and heart-burnings her childish feet passed lightly; and did not guess that even her name was an offence at Crowe Hall. 'Beatrice'!—the musical syllables which flow so softly had a repellant sound in the ears of her grandmother and aunt; for they knew to

whom homage was rendered when Mr. Cope decreed that his daughter should be christened thus. Lucy, they felt sure, could not have wished her child to bear that name of ill-omen. They made an effort to call the little girl 'Lucy' instead; but this attempt did not prosper, for although Beatrice made no opposition when her black frocks were hastily put aside and she was dressed like Bessie, she strenuously resisted the proposed change of name.

'"Tis Beatrice that is *me*,' she protested, piteously; and they could not make her comprehend that she would remain the same under an altered name.

Beatrice soon found that she must not talk of her lost home and friends. Her aunt did not actually forbid her to do so, but she was immediately silenced when she began, and therefore ceased the endeavour.

One day Squire Hunter, catching some words about 'Aunt Marjorie,' spoken by his orphan niece, called Beatrice to him.

'We need hear no more of Aunt Marjorie, little lassie,' he said. 'You belong to us now, d'ye understand?—I wish we could make these dark eyes blue, Anna!' he added, addressing his wife. 'How comes it she has no look of her mother, I marvel?'

He spoke with positive irritation; but Beatrice looked up confidingly, for she had not learnt to be afraid of the rough manner which veiled a kind heart.

'Please, uncle, love me all the same,' she said pleadingly: and for the moment Mr. Hunter almost forgave her those dark eyes and wide brows of the Copes.

Poor little Beatrice! Hers might have been an easier youth if she had borne some other name than that of the gentle, devout Queen of many sorrows, who would not willingly have darkened any young life by the shadow of her own. The name inspired prejudice against the child among the friends of her mother's family; and prevented those with whom she came in contact from ever forgetting, as her uncle desired they should forget, that she was the daughter of one who had died a traitor's shameful death.

Beatrice Cope, however, knew nothing of the Jacobites throughout the days of her childhood, in the Northumbrian manor-house. She received careful instruction, such as was bestowed upon her cousins, in both religious and secular learning, when her precocity ceased to excite alarm. The religious instruction instilled into her mind was of the somewhat vague description which found favour first in Holland, and then at the Court of William and Mary in England; and all political views brought before her were completely one-sided in their tendency, though her uncle's prudence forbade any pointed attacks upon the Jacobite tenets to be made for her benefit.

The young Hunters were brought up to believe William of Orange the deliverer of England, and to consider his opponents as factious and disloyal men; and Beatrice said no word which could show that any early memories survived in her. Her uncle and aunt noticed this at first with pleasure; and then almost forgot (as they trusted she herself did entirely) that she was not by inheritance both Whig and Broad-churchwoman. No furtive Jacobite—no nonjuring clergyman—alarmed Mr. Hunter by any attempt to gain speech of his niece, or even to inquire into his dealings with her; no importunate letters from members of her dead son-in-law's family annoyed old Madam Hunter.

Yet Madam Hunter's anxieties did not altogether sleep; and she now and then asked her daughter-in-law whether Beatrice ever spoke of her brother, seeming much relieved to hear that young Cope's name never crossed the lips of his little sister.

'Charles Cope was wise in this respect, Anna,' the old lady said. 'He gave his son entirely to the service of his master beyond the seas; and he gave his daughter entirely to us. Therein he showed both honesty and discretion. He set a gulf between the two young lives, which admitted of no compromise. And by this I see that his friend was under a mistake in imagining that Charles did but think of this

refuge for the little girl in his last extremity. He must have laid his plans in her very infancy, considering with himself what course he should pursue when taken in the toils at last. You think Beatrice has never seen her brother, Anna?'

'At all events, not within her range of conscious memory,' the younger lady replied. 'I doubt whether he has even been spoken of in her hearing.'

'That is well,' Madam answered, sinking back in her chair.

She generally sat extremely upright; but when talking of Lucy's children her strong frame seemed to feel a sudden need of support. And her fine face expressed so much trouble and unrest that her daughter-in-law, who loved the old lady well, was grieved to witness it.

'Do not vex yourself, dear Granny,' she said. 'Little Beatrice finds brothers and sisters enough and to spare, here at Crowe Hall. Ere many years have passed she will be in heart and mind as one of us.'

At this Madam only sighed once more, rousing herself to take her knitting in hand.

'I would the child had not her father's eyes,' she said. 'But she has found kind guardians in thee and Maurice, Anna. When I am gone, you will keep watch and ward over Lucy's child.'

Once only, during Beatrice Cope's childhood, an incident occurred which aroused the suspicions of her aunt. An elderly woman with a sad, furrowed face and scared eyes which dwelt wistfully upon this child, came one day to Crowe Hall. Her ostensible purpose was to find purchasers for the fine French cambric and ribbons she carried with her, strapped upon a donkey; but when the rest of the household were engrossed in the inspection of her wares, young Madam Hunter saw her stoop down and whisper to little Beatrice, who was then about nine years old.

Madam Hunter rapidly concluded her bargaining, and hurried the woman away, watching narrowly to see that she had no further speech of the child.

Not long afterwards the boys of the family, headed by Madam Hunter's nephew, young Raymond Forrest of Drumscour, came in from following the stag-hounds over hill and down dale. Raymond Forrest was much at Crowe Hall; and, being a year or two senior to the eldest of the Hunters, and a handsome, spirited fellow, was somewhat of a hero with the children there. But on this occasion he contributed little to the mirth of his cousins, and seized the first opportunity of drawing his aunt aside.

'Aunt Anna,' he said, 'do you know whence that pedlar-woman came, from whom Prue bought her

sarcenet, and Anne her lace? We crossed by the Black Scaur and Goodrest Fell this morning; and as we looked over the slope, I marked a woman and a donkey wending slowly down the lane you know of, under the holly boughs. She came from Goodrest. I pray you, have a care of little Beatrice.'

'The pedlar-woman may have called there as she called here, Raymond, in search of customers. Goodrest is a like enough place for the purchase of floss silk and gold thread for embroidery-work. The woman had a packet of such matters, I remember.'

A flash of increased suspicion crossed the lad's open countenance.

'They may have fitted her out at Goodrest,' he muttered. 'This savours mightily of a scheme, Aunt Anna. I will even take the liberty of tracking that donkey, although the afternoon grows somewhat dusk.'

He set off instantly, fleet-footed and vigorous as though the day were but beginning; and presently Beatrice received a summons to her uncle's private room.

The Squire asked her questions which she did not fully understand at the time; and she answered with such evident truthfulness as convinced him that this was certainly a first attempt upon her. There was no distress in her replies—they came quite easily

and naturally; but when Mr. Hunter asked what the pedlar-woman had said to her that day, she answered differently.

The woman had but prayed God to bless her, she said: and then she suddenly broke down into passionate sobbing, so that her uncle could question her no further.

Did she divine, what the careful disguise of person and speech might well hide from others, that the pedlar-woman was no mere emissary from her relations, as Squire Hunter and young Madam imagined, but Lady Dalrymple herself—poor 'Aunt Marjorie,' whom the hunger of the heart, combined with the fever of an almost distracted brain, had urged to this expedient for seeing her brother's orphan child once more? However this might be, Beatrice never again spoke of the pedlar-woman.

Raymond Forrest returned from his expedition unsuccessful; he had been quite unable to trace either the donkey or the woman. Both seemed to have vanished as by magic from the country-side. Only, about a week later, a pretty donkey, plump and well cared for, was seen bearing the light panniers in which a certain farmer's wife, whose husband and sons were more than suspected of Jacobitical tendencies, conveyed her butter and eggs to market. And a somewhat stumbling tale was

told, in answer to young Mr. Forrest's imperative interrogatories. The donkey had strayed upon the farmer's land, no one knew whence. Maybe it would be claimed some day—maybe not.

In the meanwhile, Raymond was requested to admire its beauty and good qualities; and Farmer Rudd showed a remarkable alacrity in observing that if he wanted a shot at the moor-fowl on the heath, or a cast of the angling-rod in Cushat Rill, Jack would be proud to show him where the birds were gathered together, and Dickon had some curious bait which was very much at the young gentleman's service.

The young gentleman, however, declined these overtures, and rode home to Drumscour with a cloudy brow. He thought much of little Beatrice Cope just then, and was half-angered that her guardians adhered strictly to the plan of ignoring that past which they were anxious she should forget. Raymond would have had them take stringent precautions for the little girl's safety; 'who knew that she might not be spirited off some day, and heard of no more?' he said.

But those whom he addressed professed to feel no alarm on this head. They watched, indeed, and directed others to watch also, against any further attempts which might be made by strangers to

accost Beatrice Cope; yet by degrees this vigilance languished, being apparently quite needless.

The Squire and his wife did not mention the incident of the pedlar-woman to old Madam Hunter. 'Twas a pity, they thought, to increase her anxieties. And when Raymond Forrest requested leave to ride up to Goodrest, and require explanations from Mr. Templar, the Squire crushed the proposal in a somewhat peremptory manner.

'Thou art but sixteen, Raymond, and hot-headed,' he said. 'Wise men, my lad, let sleeping dogs lie.'

With this answer Raymond Forrest had to be content. But he regarded Beatrice with jealous heed, thinking far more of her than of his gentle cousin Anne, or of lively Prue or merry Bessie. He wished he had a right to protect Beatrice, and to teach her with uncompromising firmness what manner of men they were who laid their plots and spun their subtle webs of policy at quiet Goodrest.

And if she was silent for a few minutes while others were merry, and her eyes grew dreamy as they sometimes would do, Raymond Forrest felt keenly impatient of the mood at which Tom and Wilfrid Hunter did but laugh. He mistrusted those brief flashes of silent thought, which seemed to set her far from her companions; and feared that they

had their rise in some faint stirrings of memory not to be quelled.

But after a while Raymond Forrest went away from Drumscour, and from the homely life there, to see the world in London-town, and to don the gay uniform of an officer in the service of good Queen Anne. In the midst of gaiety and bustle he thought seldom of the little girl at Crowe Hall, save when some chance mention of the Jacobites revived her image in his mind.

CHAPTER V.

In the year following upon that in which the visit of the pedlar-woman to Crowe Hall occurred, Mr. Hunter, riding slowly along a lonely road at dusk of a spring evening, was overtaken by Mr. Templar of Goodrest.

After the first cold greeting had passed between the gentlemen, Squire Hunter drew rein to allow the other to ride on; but Mr. Templar slackened the pace of his horse, and after proceeding in silence for a short space, said without preface—

'Have you had recent advices from France, sir?'

'I am not in the habit of maintaining correspondence in that quarter,' Mr. Hunter returned, with some offence in his tone.

'Your pardon: but I imagined that at this juncture, perchance—at least, it seemed possible that you might have heard. Your nephew, young Charles Cope——'

'What of him, sir?' the Squire asked, a flush mounting to his sunburnt brow.

'As I am informed, he has had the small-pox severely.'

'Indeed? And is now, perhaps, recovered, or nearly so?' said the Squire, in the tone with which one assumes a certainty.

'By no means,' said the other, abruptly. 'On the contrary, he is dead. 'Tis a thousand pities, for his was a brave spirit.'

'Dead!' Mr. Hunter repeated, much shocked.

He had never seen the boy in question, and had certainly never wished to see him. Yet a thrill passed through his veins when this plain announcement smote upon his ears.

'Ay, dead,' said Mr. Templar. 'He is gone where politics signify naught, and where all discord is made up. 'Tis a grievous loss, though, for we had work for him to do. I have this small packet to render to you, sir. 'Twas sent across the water for one in your care; and will maybe furnish proof of that which I report to you. The poor lad's diamond buckle, and one or two trifling matters to boot, are enclosed in the packet, I believe.'

The diamond buckle proved to be a small round brooch, such as was worn by gentlemen at that date

to fasten their lace ruffles. In the centre was a lock of dark hair, crossed by one of flaxen fairness; and the entwined initials at the back were those of Charles Cope and Lucy his wife. The diamonds of which Mr. Templar spoke were but brilliants of little value.

A ribbon upon which an order had been worn, and two small gold clasps of foreign workmanship, made up the parcel, which was addressed in French to the honoured care of Squire Hunter, at his house of Crowe Hall, for the hands of his niece, Mistress Beatrice Cope.

Nevertheless, Beatrice Cope was nigh upon sixteen years of age before these things passed into the hands for which they were intended. She grew up in a cheerful home such as her father in his last hours had earnestly desired for her, secure, to all appearance, from the troubles which did but slumber in the realm. And at sixteen she was fast becoming a tall and graceful lady, with an indescribable air of distinction about her, which her cousins did not possess. Her face, too, had a winning charm, born of quick sympathies and ever-varying expression; and, although the features were irregular, the soft dark eyes and delicately-traced eyebrows were indisputably lovely.

She was light-hearted and merry, easily made

happy, and easily cast down; taking herself quite contentedly at the valuation of others, which was not very high, and enjoying every pleasure and indulgence afforded her. No one would have imagined that Beatrice's life of conscious thought and recollection had begun under shadow of a great and awful tragedy; that deep down in her heart lay the unforgotten knowledge that her father had suffered death for the banished King James, together with some few haunting memories of other scenes and other faces than those which had for years surrounded her.

She appeared to be simply a bright, affectionate, easily-influenced creature, whose life was certain, one would say, to be much what those who had control over her might choose to make it.

And to this girl, one Christmas Eve, when the house was jubilant from hall to garret, and the boys were bringing in the holly and mistletoe boughs, Squire Hunter gave a small brooch, a faded ribbon, and two golden clasps.

'You are old enough to have these now, my dear,' he said. 'They are mementos of your parents and your only brother, all dead and gone. Well, well! your father did his duty, as he saw it: no one can deny that Charles Cope was ever a gallant gentleman. And as for your mother, my sister Lucy, the

sun never shone upon a sweeter woman. They are gone to their rest, poor souls . . . and the world went hardly with them . . . I doubt 'tis well over. —Gather up your trinkets, child; but do not wear the brooch openly, lest the sight of it should pain Granny. Her eyes wax dim, now-a-days; yet they must be dull indeed ere they fail to recognize the light of Lucy's hair.'

Beatrice Cope went away with her treasures, as she was bidden. She spread them out upon the broad window-ledge in the room she shared with Bessie Hunter, and examined them by the help of the lingering glow in the western sky, and the rising moon in the east. She did not weep; but a soft mist clouded her eyes, and she looked very pale in the pale moonbeams.

Bessie Hunter found her cousin thus, when she ran up-stairs to dress for the evening gaiety.

'Why, Beatrice!' Bessie cried out, 'I have been wondering this hour past where you had hidden yourself. And Tom wanted you to tie the holly wreath for the high mantelshelf in the hall; and Prue declared you had promised to deck the sweetmeats for the supper-table. And, to crown all, Raymond Forrest has arrived from Drumscour, with Ermine and Winifred; and his first words were, "Where is little Beatrice, Bessie?"—But what is

amiss, dear heart? You are pale and sad, on Christmas Eve, Beatrice!'

'I cannot help it,' poor Beatrice said. 'See here, Bessie, Uncle Maurice gave me these as the afternoon was darkening. Does it not seem sad to have missed so much love, sweet one? to have had father, mother, and brother once; and out of the wreck of life's wealth to save but these poor relics?—They are relics of a love I never knew, Bessie. I cannot remember my mother; I know not if I ever saw my brother; and my father—my father was taken from me when I could scarce weep for him, I was so little, and so silly, and so easily comforted. But I have had strange dreams o' nights, latterly; I have seen my dead father present with me continually in my sleep. You know 'tis but faint memory of him that I have in waking moments; and in my dreams I never see his face. Yet some shadowy presence like to his is with me while I sleep; and now at sight of these things, which he perhaps touched—upon which his eyes looked—the past starts to life again, for a moment. It will fade—it is fading now—your voice and your touch push it away and blot it out, Bessie. I dread it—and yet to part with it seems almost harder still.'

'Beatrice, Beatrice!' Bessie said, imploringly; and all the mirth was banished from her face by an

appearance like dismay. 'Beatrice, dear heart, dream no more thus, I entreat you!—Your father lived in ill days; pray Heaven they be ended, never to return!—Dream no more, Beatrice. Have we been lacking to you in anything, here at Crowe Hall? Have you not father, mother, and brothers—ay, and sisters too—as loving as ever your own could be? Is there any difference set between you, and Anne, and Prue, and me?—Sure, you know there is not, Beatrice.'

Beatrice clasped her cousin close, and showered kisses upon Bessie's cheek and brow.

'There is no difference, sweet one,' she said, speaking in her own joyous tones once more. 'Truly I am fortunate and happy; for I have never known the lack of the home and love which vanished from me years ago.—'Tis only the sight of these things which brings strange thoughts. Help me to put them into my little ebony box, Bessie—the box which Raymond Forrest gave me when he went away from Drumscour.—There, we turn the key upon mournful memories; and I am glad again, as befits Christmas Eve.'

And Mistress Beatrice Cope, whose temperament was naturally buoyant, recovered quickly from her depression, and was gay among the gayest that evening, winning a smile even from stately Dame

Alicia Forrest, the mother of Raymond and his sisters—although Dame Alicia misliked any special liveliness of disposition. However, Beatrice at this time was reckoned a child, and received a kitten's license to charm all eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

RAYMOND FORREST, who had become a fine soldierly young man of an open and pleasant countenance, was much at Crowe Hall after this Christmas Eve had passed away. His father, old Sir Eustace Forrest, died in the spring of the year; and Raymond's succession to the title and estate kept him constantly at home during many months. And as time went by a wish arose in Dame Alicia's heart —a wish which Beatrice Cope was the unconscious means of thwarting.

Dame Alicia wished for a daughter-in-law from Crowe Hall, and the cousinship of the young people there formed no barrier in her mind. She set her fancy upon Anne Hunter, for her son. Anne was three years younger than Raymond Forrest; pretty, gentle, and well-dowered; submissive, too, and easy to live with, Dame Alicia thought. She did not want a daughter-in-law of whom she knew nothing; and who could say in what direction Raymond's idle

fancy might be caught? Therefore Dame Alicia was eager to arrange this marriage, as the marriages of royal persons are arranged; and many were her schemes for the furtherance of a partiality which unfortunately did not exist.

Raymond and Anne had indeed a warm affection for each other; but the feeling between them was too completely that of an attached and sympathetic brother and sister to have afforded much ground for hope to a more observant woman than Dame Alicia.

Dame Alicia, however, was not observant; and moreover she was in the habit of carrying any point on which she fixed her mind. She had ruled her husband, by the force of a narrow nature and an obstinate will: and she now meant to rule her son.

The old grandmother at Crowe Hall was the first person to whom Dame Alicia spoke of her hopes concerning Raymond and Anne: and Madam Hunter gave one of her quick glances from the keen blue eyes which still looked bright although the sight was failing.

'A bride may go one day from Crowe Hall to Drumscour, Dame,' she said, 'but I do not think her name will be Anne. There is no other name, belike, which might suit you as well?'

'I prefer Anne to Prue, I own,' said Dame Alicia, with dignity. 'Prue is sometimes a little hasty in

temper, and over-quick with her tongue. There is a moderation in Anne's speech and deportment which well beseems a gentlewoman. Anne suits me best, in all respects, though I find no fault with Prue. And as to little Bessie, she is too young for Raymond.'

'Then clearly Anne must be the bride-elect, since neither Prue nor Bessie can serve your turn,' Madam Hunter replied; and again she glanced at the face of her visitor, with that hawk-like swiftness of observation.

But Dame Alicia noticed neither the glance nor the veiled satire of the rejoinder.

'Yes, I think it must be Anne,' she said. 'Anne pleases us all, at Drumscour. And I trust that Raymond will lose no time in bringing matters to a point; for I have faith in the proverb, "Happy's the wooing that's not long a-doing." They have nought to wait for. 'Tis mighty provoking when young folks are slow to know their own mind.'

'Daughter Anna,' said old Madam Hunter, when her daughter-in-law sat near her elbow-chair late that evening,—'Daughter Anna, here is like to be a pretty coil! Dame Alicia Forrest hath decreed that her son shall woo and wed our Anne. Our Anne heeds him not, and he heeds not her—nor ever will, while Beatrice Cope casts a glamour over his wits.

She is not as bonny as your girls, Anna; she lacks their clear white and pink; but she has a witching way with her—I suppose 'tis the same wherewith Charles Cope won her poor mother's heart years agone. No Hunter has the trick on't, I warrant me. And there will be trouble by and by, if she stays here.'

'Young Madam Hunter,' as the Squire's wife was still called, although silver threads were fast appearing in her plentiful light-brown hair, paused a moment to consider this weighty speech.

'Why, Granny,' she then said tenderly, 'what trouble should there be? Anne heeds not Raymond; and for Maurice and myself, we desire not marriages betwixt first-cousins, and would do naught to bring one about. 'Tis an over-close relationship, to my thinking. But if Raymond Forrest thinks upon Beatrice, 'tis another matter; and I for one see no objection. Her uncle will not let her go dowerless from Crowe Hall.'

'You are over-simple, Anna,' Madam said, with a flash of impatience. 'Those who might be well content to welcome Anne or Prue, will look sourly upon Beatrice Cope. And I know not what you may think, but I pity the woman whom Raymond Forrest weds in opposition to his mother's will and pleasure.'

Young Madam Hunter knew her sister-in-law's

disposition too well to be able to dispute Granny's saying. And therefore, after many consultations between the elder and the younger mistress of Crowe Hall, Beatrice Cope was sent to visit a maiden lady in the neighbourhood, one Mistress Delia Pettigrew, who counted some third or fourth cousinship with the Hunters of Crowe Hall.

Beatrice Cope knew no reason for this banishment; and, sooth to say, was very loth to go. Everything was gay and charming at the Hall just then. The brothers were at home; and Raymond Forrest's comings were continual, and perhaps counted for more than she had any idea of with Beatrice. To be sent away from the merry party of young folk to play companion to Mistress Pettigrew in her dull parlour at Whiteoaks, was no agreeable change to a girl before whom life was opening radiant and sweet. But Beatrice had to submit, with the best grace she might; and Bessie Hunter was left, a maiden all forlorn, bereft of her dearest companion.

Tears gathered in Beatrice's eyes as she rode behind old Thomas the groom through the deep lanes to Whiteoaks; and she brushed away several heavy drops which made the spring landscape dim and misty. The lanes were full of their April beauty, yellow primroses and glittering celandine and delicate hemlock-leaves newly sprung, making many a patch

of brightness along the mossy banks. Beatrice, however, could only think that she should gather no primroses with Bessie that spring, and that 'twas a long, long ride from Drumscour to Whiteoaks.—And, moreover, 'twas scarcely likely that Raymond Forrest, for example, should have business to transact with Mistress Delia Pettigrew.

Whiteoaks lay in the full smile of the afternoon sun as the steady old sorrel, the still steadier old groom, and the young girl so full of life, so overflowing with vivid hopes and fears, wended their way up the last gentle ascent. They made slow progress; for the sorrel horse, although large and strong, had the sobriety of age, and declined to hurry himself for any one—least of all for his friend Thomas, who to be sure was never known to urge him to any exertion of speed. Thomas was quite contented to dawdle along at the sorrel's own pace, in the pleasant rays of the sun.

'"Twill be strange and quiet for 'ee, Mistress Beatrice, along wi' th' old lady. There weren't never be no stir of no sort, not at Whiteoaks,' said Thomas, offering an observation to beguile the way.

'Yes, Thomas; it will be strange and quiet.'

'And Mistress Bessie, she 'ull miss 'ee, above a bit.'

'And I shall miss her,' said Beatrice, with a sigh.

'But maybe I shall only pay a short visit, Thomas. Old people do not always care to have young ones about them, I suppose.'

'No, more they don't,' replied Thomas, who held strong opinions on this point in his own person. 'My old 'ooman and me, we couldn't abide the worrit o' young folk, not continual-like, if 'twere ever so. Now and again, 'tis heartsome to see 'em; but not continual-like, Mistress Beatrice, not continual-like. For why, the ways o' young folk and old folk goes contrairy. But gentlefolk is different, mebbe,' said Thomas, feeling that to account for the tastes and fancies of 'the quality' was a task quite beyond his powers.

'Well, Thomas, if I soon come back to Crowe Hall, you will know 'tis because Mistress Pettigrew cannot put up with the worrit of me,' said Beatrice, springing lightly to the ground, scarce needing the help of the steps by which the sorrel horse paused.

CHAPTER VII.

MISTRESS DELIA PETTIGREW—or 'Madam Pettigrew,' as she was now beginning to be styled—would probably have demurred to the undoubting verdict by which Beatrice and Thomas, from opposite poles of thought, assigned her her place among the old people. She had scarcely realized as yet that middle-age had overtaken her. She lived alone; and spent much time in bemoaning a loneliness which peculiarity of character, even more than natural circumstances, had brought upon her. Having failed to sow the seed of love in her youth, Mistress Delia, perhaps, could hardly expect to reap a plentiful harvest in her age. She was not on terms with the few near relations remaining to her; but she clung to the Hunters of Crowe Hall, who from simple good feeling and native geniality put up with her oddities, and passed over many vexatious encroachments, as being merely 'Mistress Delia's way.'

This lady had often begged for a visit from one of

the girls at Crowe Hall; and now poor Beatrice was sent forth from the merry home, to sit in Mistress Delia's parlour, and listen to the endless iteration of a voice which seemed incapable of silence. Young Madam Hunter had secretly wished to let matters take their course between Raymond Forrest and Beatrice Cope; and she did not think a visit to Mistress Pettigrew very likely to banish fancies and dreams from the mind of Beatrice, supposing any such to be dawning there.

But old Madam Hunter had determined upon Beatrice's temporary exile; and Granny's will was law at Crowe Hall. Since Beatrice must go somewhere for a while, to satisfy Granny's anxieties, Whiteoaks seemed to be the only haven open to her.

Beatrice Cope did her best to appear contented at Whiteoaks. Conversation was not in Mistress Delia's line; but she liked a patient listener to her lengthy monologues, and enjoyed having a young girl at her disposal. Beatrice had never before known that days could be so long and so tedious; at Crowe Hall the hours flew, while here they crept away with leaden slowness. Life was very comfortable and profoundly wearisome under Mistress Delia's auspices. She did not understand any withdrawal from her society; the sight of a book was an offence to her;

and her young guest had no refuge from the flow of Mistress Delia's talk, save in her own thoughts.

Very naturally these turned to Crowe Hall, and to Raymond Forrest. In remembering pleasant days gone past, Raymond's words and looks assumed increased prominence; and Beatrice could not refrain from wondering whether he missed her much or little. That Bessie missed her much, she knew well; but the 'how much' of Raymond's feeling was matter of speculation. And one day Beatrice, having gained permission to wander in the country lanes, went further than she intended, being occupied with these and similar speculations.

She strayed beyond the little hamlet which usually bounded her walks, and found herself in a deep lane leading she knew not whither. The afternoon had been beautifully fine; but just at this moment heavy clouds darkened the sky, and an April shower came pouring down, obscuring the distant landscape, and threatening Mistress Beatrice with a drenching unless she could reach some immediate shelter. The trees were as yet leafless, the hedges only beginning to show a dawning tint of green.

Beatrice cast a quick glance to right and left; and discerned the chimney of a cottage or keeper's lodge at the brow of the hill where dark pine-trees showed black among oaks and elms already reddened by the

rising sap. Making the best speed she could, she gathered up her skirts and ran; and Mistress Beatrice Cope was very fleet of foot. She soon reached the gate within which this cottage stood, and passed through it, not knowing that the circumstance of its standing ajar was strange indeed.

She was breathless and dripping; the colour in her cheeks was bright, and her eyes danced with mirth as she gained her refuge beneath the deep, low porch.

The pelting storm went on; and while she hesitated whether to knock at the oaken door and beg for admittance to the fireside, or to make the best of her damp garments in the chilly breeze which penetrated the apertures of the stone work which sheltered her, the door was opened from within, and a woman's voice fell softly upon Beatrice's ear.

'The fever is abated,' this voice said, with a gentle sympathy which written words fail to express. 'A little quietness and care, and all will now be well. Only you must take heed to give the nourishment I will presently send, in accordance with the directions you have received. Not much at a time, I pray you remember, even should the patient crave for it; but a few spoonsful frequently, Annot Graham.'

In the desire to impress these and other directions, conveyed forcibly, yet in few words, the speaker did

not look round; and the person whom she addressed listened too intently to observe aught but the face of her instructress.

Presently, however, both turned towards the open door; and Beatrice Cope saw a countenance which fascinated her strangely. Under a plain hood eyes large and clear, with an exceeding seriousness and purity in their glance, looked forth upon the world; the delicate yet full lips expressed the firmness of self-control, and the sweetness of a nature made for kindly affections. The great simplicity of dress, at a period when 'people of condition,' as the phrase was, used some magnificence, indicated either a religious life or an inferior station. Face and bearing alike contradicted the latter inference; the former was new and unfamiliar to Beatrice Cope. She wondered whether this lady might belong to the sect of the Quakers, which was then becoming known; but presently dismissed the idea, on finding herself accosted with the customary forms of ceremony. Her new acquaintance, however, spoke with a sincerity of interest which might have befitted the most veracious member of the Society of Friends.

'You are very wet, madam, and the rain pours down. Can I serve you in anything? Here, I fear, you must not shelter; for there is illness in the house, such as might prove contagious to one of your

youth, did you enter. In the porch, in this draught of air, you are safe from that risk, but are liable to take cold, in your thin damp dress. Will you walk with me to the house, yonder? You can scarce be wetter, I think, than you already are.'

Beatrice's thanks were quick and winning; yet she hesitated a little.

'You, yourself, madam!' she said. 'You will soon be in my own evil plight; and——'

'Do not regard it,' the lady said; and the dawning smile which accompanied her words was the sweetest Beatrice had ever seen. 'My cloak turns much weather, and I am not wont to loiter when an errand is done. My business with Job Eccles' granddaughter and her sick child is over.'

They went out together into the storm of wind and rain, which now raged with all the petulant violence of an April tempest. The branches of the large trees under which they passed were tossed to and fro—the few remaining leaves of last autumn were whirled from each forgotten hiding-place—the little wild-flowers of spring were soon beaten to the earth, and cowered down as though the delicate heads must be utterly crushed. Beatrice's companion threaded the mazes of a narrow walk which diverged from the broader way, winding in and out among thick clumps of laurel and cypress. She walked very

quickly, with the easy grace of one to whom exercise is habitual; and her steps did not pause until a door in a massive boundary-wall was reached. This she unlocked, with a key which she took from her girdle.

'Welcome to Goodrest,' she said, turning her sweet eyes full upon the girl at her side; and Mistress Beatrice Cope stepped from the storm-swept pleasance into a very sheltered garden.

Beatrice long remembered how a wavering ray of pale sunshine slanted down over the gray roof of Goodrest, and lay athwart that sheltered patch of garden-ground. Wherever the track of light fell, bushes and turf glittered with a myriad dazzling drops, and each fair colour looked fairer, because all around was dark and dull. And the thought occurred to Beatrice—why, she knew not then—that her guide much resembled that wandering sunbeam, born to illumine dark and showery places with quiet modest cheer. 'Twas easy to see that life's joyous days had been few with her, and life's sorrows many; and yet that knowledge came not from any tinge of gloom in look or bearing.

There is a serene cheerfulness which tells its own story; and Beatrice Cope needed no one to inform her that this lady had suffered much, with a constant mind.

Goodrest was but a name, at this time, to Mistress

Beatrice Cope. She had never heard any talk of the place—or, at least, none that she remembered; and the proscribed family of Templar were little mentioned in the country-side. Beatrice did not know that when she entered the grounds of Goodrest she made her first step beyond the magic circle of her girlhood's happy days. She walked down the pleached alley with a light heart, well pleased with the little adventure which seemed likely to break the monotony of her existence at Whiteoaks in an agreeable fashion, and more than well pleased with the companion and helper whom the storm had brought to her aid.

'Is Goodrest your home, madam?' she presently asked. 'The place has a mighty pleasant name; and indeed I think the very air is full of rest and peace. We know little of the wind and rain now; and without the shelter of these walls 'twas all we could do to fight our way along.'

'Goodrest has formed a shelter against a worse storm than that which you and I have come through together,' the lady said. 'In some sort it is my home; but I am not the mistress here. I am but one among many who share the protection of this quiet spot, and the peace of its repose. Yet I have interest enough to procure you every assistance and accommodation which our household can offer. My

name is Agnes Ingram; and I have dwelt here during seven long years.'

'And my name, madam, is Beatrice Cope,' the young girl replied, with shy yet eager frankness. 'I am staying with Madame Pettigrew, at Whiteoaks; and I missed the right turning in the lanes down by the hamlet of Whitecross, this afternoon. Then the rain came in floods; and I espied the chimney of yon little lodge among the trees.'

Agnes Ingram turned her head at the sound of the name—'Beatrice Cope.' She looked at the girl who spoke with a new interest, wistful and pathetic. This, however, was not openly manifest; and Beatrice finished her sentence without remarking aught peculiar in the listener's manner of hearkening.

'You are, then, only visiting Whiteoaks?' asked Agnes.

'Yes,' said Beatrice. 'My home is away yonder to the westward, across the Black Scaur, and over that bleak range of heathy hills. I dwell in my uncle's family, at Crowe Hall.'

Agnes Ingram inclined her head.

'The Hunters of Crowe Hall are often spoken of in these parts,' she said.

By this time they were entering the house itself, and presently crossed a small hall or vestibule, hung with armour and accoutrements long since disused,

but polished and cared for by some diligent hands. Agnes Ingram led the way across a flagged passage, and up two or three steep steps. Then she opened a door; and Beatrice heard the rushing and pelting of the rain upon glazed windows. The apartment into which she was ushered was long and wide, and well lighted by several casements. The first glance showed it to be a room in which much work was done by neat and orderly people. Embroidery-frames and copying-desks were placed where the best light might fall upon them; and at a large table in the centre a figure not unlike that of Agnes Ingram bent low over many folds of woollen material which a pair of strong white hands were cutting and shaping skilfully. Eight or ten women, some scarce older than Beatrice Cope, some fast advancing to life's meridian, sat or stood before the desks and frames. All were occupied; each hand moved with the firmness and assurance of success which long practice in any art gives. And a fresh young voice was singing sweetly —so sweetly that Beatrice, who loved music of any sort, paused a moment the better to hear the strain. It was an old religious melody, beautiful and quaint—

'O happy harbour of the Saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.
. . . . . .

'Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green,
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

'Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of Life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of Life doth grow.

'There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the Angels sit,
And evermore do sing.'

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH these words the songstress, a girl weaving lace upon a pillow, fell suddenly silent, whether because of some knot or inequality in her thread, or in consequence of the entrance of a stranger, Beatrice did not know. And in the stillness which followed, Agnes Ingram presented Mistress Beatrice Cope to the lady at the table, who seemed to hold a chief place among the other gentlewomen.

Now it is commonly noticed concerning women in all ranks that they settle the smallest matter with the greatest multiplicity of words, often expending an amount of talk and comment quite disproportioned to the triviality they have to adjust. At Crowe Hall, for instance, the reception of an unexpected visitor, dripping wet and somewhat astray as to her homeward road, would have proved excitement sufficient to set every tongue in the house going fast and long. But here at Goodrest all were occupied;

and moreover it was a rule of life to be somewhat chary of unnecessary words.

To furnish Mistress Beatrice Cope with dry clothing; to appoint her a chamber for the night, since the rain continued to fall with force sufficient to render the lanes difficult for female travelling; to despatch a messenger to Whiteoaks with explanation of her whereabouts—seemed a very simple affair to Agnes Ingram and the elder lady upon whom the control of this orderly household devolved. Few words sufficed, as to this. But of kindly glances, and courteous welcome, there was no lack. Each person in the room raised her head from her work with a little gentle bow and smile, as Beatrice passed with her first friend towards a door at the opposite end of the apartment. They made her heartily welcome to all they had, and all which they could do for her; but, seeing that she had no present need of any save Agnes, they continued their tasks as usual. And in a tiny sleeping-room, quite bare of decoration, but scrupulously neat and clean, Agnes Ingram brought out a gown such as she herself wore, dry shoes, and stockings knitted of undyed lamb's-wool.

'"Tis very plain,' she said, with a smile, 'but comfortable, I trust; and, while your own attire is dried, you will not, I hope, feel ill at ease in mine. We are nearly of a size, are we not?—though you,

maybe, are a thought the taller, and my shape is somewhat fuller than yours. But indeed the gown fits you to a marvel,' she added, looking approvingly at Beatrice in her new costume.

Beatrice herself could scarce restrain her amusement, so great a change had the change of dress effected. Her girlish fineries of lace and ribbon, the modish sacque and gay petticoat which she and Bessie Hunter alike wore, her blue stockings embroidered with white floss silk, and her high-heeled shoes rendered smarter still by large buckles on the instep, had given place to soft gray stuff and softer muslin. The dress fell in simple lines to which no hoop gave amplitude; the muslin fichu crossed upon the bosom relieved the plainness of the material, but could hardly be called an adornment. And her hair, which was always arranged in a multitude of loose ringlets and more studied waves, had been thoroughly damped by the shower, and hung straight and mournful at its full length.

'Indeed, I think your hair must even follow my fashions too,' said Agnes Ingram, noticing this defect in Beatrice's toilette.

And, ere many minutes elapsed, she had gathered the smooth luxuriant tresses into one thick braid, thus making the transformation still more complete.

After this the two descended the stairs together;

and Beatrice Cope sat among the ladies of Goodrest, well entertained in watching the skill and taste of their handicraft, and listening with pleasure to the singing which took the place of conversation at this time. First one and then another would chant some sweet strain, often plaintive, sometimes stirring, always of a religious tenor.

Beatrice Cope thought that work might well be orderly and harmonious which was done to the accompaniment of canticles like these. She noticed the tranquil calm of the faces around her—a calm not of apathy or dulness, but of peace. The owners of those faces were satisfied, she thought. There was no unrestful craving hidden under the quiet brows; no lurking bitterness or fretfulness to be revealed by some chance tension of the lips, some sharper accent of the voice. In Agnes Ingram's face natural beauty aided the expression of thoughts and feelings more beautiful still; but over each countenance brooded the serenity which comes from well-spent days, and labours in which all thought of self fades gradually out of sight.

Presently the sound of a bell caused an immediate cessation of every employment. The ladies rose one by one, passing out of the room in an order which seemed to be habitual. Only Agnes lingered, taking Beatrice's hand in hers.

'Tis the summons to prayer,' she said. 'We keep the Hours very strictly, in this family; and 'tis marvellous how the oft-recurring chime of the bell sanctifies and tranquillizes all toil. No one is weary, no one is hurried or overwrought, here at Goodrest. Will you come with us to the Church, madam? You too, without doubt, hold the Anglo-Catholic Faith in its entirety?'

Now as to this last query Beatrice was not very competent to give an answer; but with regard to the first she showed no hesitation. Indeed, 'tis hard to say whither Agnes Ingram could have beckoned, that Beatrice might be unwilling to follow. Thus easily and completely is the heart of a girl won by a sweet and gracious woman somewhat further advanced in life than herself.

Beatrice went with Agnes to the Church which stood, as has been said, at a short distance from the house. The approach to the sacred building was through a yew-hedge of uncommon size and thickness, in the heart of which a narrow walk had been cut. The strong branches with their close dark leaves formed a canopy almost impervious to rain; and the hedge and the walk within were held to be mighty curious, and were much accounted of at Goodrest. This walk was also very convenient, since the family went to and from their Church at all

hours of the day and night, and in all descriptions of weather.

The Church itself was dedicated in the name of S. Bride, that favourite saint of the North Country; and was of Norman architecture, of a very early date. Many centuries had worn away all sharpness from the outlines, within and without; and the thick walls were studded with brasses recording the names of departed Templars, and the feats of arms they achieved. Their banners, faded, torn, and dim, drooped from the rafters of the clerestory; their bones lay beneath the marble pavement, quiet enough now. And the hands of gentle women kept the little Church in a great neatness and purity; and light feet came and went perpetually, while the martial heroes slept beneath their noiseless tread.

The voice of prayer and praise was seldom silent within the walls of S. Bride. Priests and deacons kept midnight vigil there, pleading for the Church they saw in peril of being humbled to the very dust. On all hands, the outlook was dark for them, as Queen Anne's declining days drew slowly to a close. Their allegiance to their Stuart King was firm and true; yet he had been bred up in the Roman Communion, and his dealings with the Church of the country over which he came to reign were dubious in the extreme. If James the Third inherited the spirit

of his father, there might be more Bishops in the Tower of London when he sat securely on his throne. And yet the opposite side of the picture was darker still. If the nation rejected its rightful sovereign once more, a flood of free-thought, of immorality, of bare and meagre Protestantism, must pour in upon the land from Germany. The leaven introduced into the Church of England by William of Orange was working and gaining strength; that leaven against which the saintly Bishop Ken had given forth his testimony in agony of soul. The foundations were being sapped; the glory of Catholicity could not depart from England, but might be dimmed, obscured, and hidden throughout many generations.

And, with the dread of this consummation ever before their eyes, the clergy of Goodrest fasted and prayed; while devout laymen, set apart for some special service, shared their vigil from time to time. And the women, who could but wait, and pray the secret prayers of the helpless, and toil with hand and brain to furnish forth means for those enterprises which others were to conduct, knelt oftener and oftener before the Altar where all care might be laid down, for awhile.

Beatrice Cope was not accustomed to hear the daily offices of the Church performed; for at Crowe Hall one service on Sunday, and one lengthy sermon

from the chaplain during the week, were held to fulfil all obligations and to meet all spiritual requirements. But hidden fibres of her nature thrilled responsive to the grave and reverent worship in the little Church, where the light was fading. The musical voice of the officiating priest, the low responses of the kneeling congregation whose every gesture acknowledged a Divine and Awful Presence in their midst, the very care with which each detail of the simple ceremonial was dwelt upon, affected Beatrice's imagination powerfully.

Strange subtle sympathy between dead father and living daughter!—No lapse of years, no compliant docility of a very teachable nature, could make 'the use of Geneva' otherwise than a foreign use to the soul of Beatrice Cope. What she missed, she knew not; until, in the quiet Church of S. Bride, she found that which had vanished out of her life for thirteen long years.

Agnes Ingram knelt at her side, in the exceeding abstraction and motionless quiet wherewith these devout women of Goodrest were wont to submit themselves to the holy influences which brooded over their souls. The passivity of their worship was one of its most remarkable features. With them there was no anxious striving after a certain height and measure of devotion—no excitement, no effort; but

rather an intense realization of the drawing near of the Divine to the earthly—an entire yielding of body, soul and spirit to the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Such worship, maybe, is only possible to the pure in heart, who 'see GOD.'

And those to whom that all-sufficing Vision is granted, ask no more. They cannot speak of that which they feel and know; but in their hearts a voice speaks continually, saying, 'This is the way; walk ye in it;' and through life's severest trials they possess their souls in peace.

CHAPTER IX.

In the hall of the house, after Evening Prayer, Mr. Templar of Goodrest accosted Beatrice Cope with much urbanity. He had not been present in the Church himself; but his companion, a tall dark gentleman who stood somewhat behind him in the shadow of the staircase, had occupied one of the Choir Stalls within the pierced screen. This gentleman did not speak, or come forward in any way. He merely bowed to Mistress Beatrice Cope, and listened to the few words which passed between her and the master of the house. But when the brief interview was over, this silent spectator turned away abruptly, and hastened out into the April twilight. The air was full of the fresh scent of rain upon newly-sprung grass; the clouds were breaking into light veils of mist, through which many stars twinkled.

Mr. Templar's friend stood with head uncovered in the moist chill air, as though he needed the coolness

and refreshment it could give. His temples were throbbing, his lips were dry and hot. For he had seen a face and heard a voice which forcibly recalled to him one of the supreme moments of his life—a moment in which he stood forth, a distinct unit in a vast crowd, to meet the gaze of a man who went forward to a fearful death.

'*His* daughter!' he murmured to himself, with lips parched and white. 'The daughter of Charles Cope!'

Beatrice supped with the household of Goodrest that evening; but the gentleman whom her presence so greatly affected, absented himself from the long table in the hall at which the family met together. This occasioned no remark at Goodrest, such absences being frequent, and needing no explanation or apology. During the meal two young students of Divinity read aloud to the company; and to Beatrice Cope this seemed a wondrous pleasant method of improving the time. She knew little of the world of books; and the biography in hand, being written in a manner to arouse interest, read with much skill, and commented upon by intelligent listeners, came as a novelty to her, and delighted her fancy. She was sorry when the hour for this employment drew to a close; although the discovery that Agnes Ingram was now able and willing to sit awhile

with her apart, more than made amends for its cessation.

Agnes was never idle, the rule of life at Goodrest forbidding the waste of stray minutes. Her hands moved mechanically as she knitted a shawl which would one day comfort the shoulders of some poor body; but her ears and her thoughts were none the less at Beatrice's service. And Beatrice was greatly pleased to talk of herself and her own life to this new friend of a day, in whose heart a face once seen and a voice once heard remained fixed, as is the way with some stay-at-home folk of wide sympathies. The young girl spoke much of the happy days at Crowe Hall; of the Christmas and Eastertide merry-makings; the large hunt-breakfasts at which half the country-side assembled; the skating-parties in winter, the frolic in the hay-fields in summer; the joy of wheat harvest, and the mirth of sprightly dances when the hall was decked with garlands and crowded with guests. She told Agnes Ingram of her uncle's hearty kindness to the boys and girls around him; and chattered of her aunt's motherly fondness and wise household ways. Gentle Anne, lively Prue, merry Bessie; high-spirited Tom, grave Wilfred, mischievous Frank, and little wilful Bob—Agnes Ingram knew them one and all, from this girl's frank and loving talk. She had a distinct picture

in her mind of Granny, too: Granny, who sat by the chimney corner in winter, and the oriel window in summer, and observed all that went on among her descendants—Granny, who was not always perfectly well satisfied with Mistress Beatrice Cope. This last little fact Agnes gathered in the course of Beatrice's chat. Many trifles pointed to it; and suggested that old Madam Hunter regarded her daughter's child with misgivings, in which a measure of criticism was blended.

Then came some mention of the Forrests of Drumscour; and Agnes Ingram, quick of sight and sure of perception, guessed more than Beatrice knew of the reasons which had determined this absence from home.

'Mistress Delia Pettigrew is very kind,' poor Beatrice said, rather mournfully, 'very kind indeed; for 'twas Prue and not me that she wanted to have at Whiteoaks. But Madam my grandmother said 'twas best that I should go; for Prue could ill be spared, just now. She has a cunning hand in confectionery; Granny thinks no conserves like those which Prue makes. And my jellies and creams turn out but poorly many a time and oft. Yet I think Aunt Anna was sorry to let me go—they were all sorry, except Granny herself. Granny is never sorry, when once she has made up her mind that a thing is

to be. 'Tis passing dull at Whiteoaks, after Crowe Hall. You would find the hours hang forlornly yourself, Mistress Agnes, for Madam Pettigrew loves not to see one occupied. She likes to talk, from morning till night. And although she is kind, and it does not become me to reflect upon her manner of conversation, 'tis true that I grow utterly wearied with hearing continually what this one said, and what Mistress Delia replied, and what another did, and why each one thus spoke and thus acted. They are very small matters of which Mistress Delia makes much speech; and she is not always good-natured in her talk. If life has its sordid seamy side, sure 'tis best not to drag it to the light. Many a day I have seen my aunt grow uncomfortable and ill at ease during the flow of Mistress Delia's gossipry. And yet she means no harm; 'tis but the unchecked license of a tongue neither wise nor witty . . . . . I think I dislike such converse more than Prue does; Prue can ever pick some entertainment from Mistress Delia's words and ways. But to me 'tis melancholy to look and to listen. My thoughts take an ill flavour, at Whiteoaks.'

Agnes Ingram's hands paused a moment in their task.

'And you are right, madam,' she said, looking straight before her with her earnest gaze. 'That

which you describe is melancholy, in good truth. Such women are sorely to be pitied; for 'tis out of a vacant life, a vacant heart, and a vacant head, that they speak. They are to be pitied; but also, I think, to be blamed; seeing that the good GOD formed none of His creatures to endure that vacancy. To all is some humble talent given, the exercise of which should keep them busy, harmless, and content. The recognition of this is, I believe, the secret of our quiet happy life here, which passes in great harmony, free from the strife of tongues. We take pains to discover what each one can do best; and thus the labours of the day are duly apportioned. And when the faculties of the mind are fully engaged, the tongue finds little time to err.'

'Ah, madam, this is a holy place!' said Beatrice, very wistfully. ''Tis a still and beautiful life that you lead, apart from all turmoil. You have lived here seven years; sure, you will never quit Goodrest, Mistress Agnes?'

The girl wondered at the light which came into the large serious eyes of the elder woman.

'Listen, dear child,' said Agnes Ingram. 'I do but wait, here. My father is in banishment for a Cause of which doubtless you have heard mention; one very dear to me is with him in a foreign land. . . . I have looked upon neither face for the

space of these seven years. . . . Where they summon me, I shall go—when the time comes. Meanwhile, I do but wait.'

Beatrice trembled very much.

'My father died upon the scaffold for that Cause of which you speak,' she whispered. 'And my only brother died in France when I was but a child.'

After this neither Agnes nor Beatrice felt any desire for further speech. They sat together a short while longer; and Beatrice's little quivering hand lay in Agnes's quiet clasp, and grew tranquil and steady there.

By and by Agnes beguiled her back to the old gay talk about Crowe Hall and the pleasant incidents of her familiar life there; and the very vividness and alertness with which Beatrice's spirits sprang up again from their temporary depression and tremor showed her new friend that the nature of this girl was highly strung, and calculated to experience both pleasure and pain in much intensity.

Beatrice Cope did not accompany Agnes Ingram to the Compline prayers in Church, but lay down to sleep in her little cell-like room, where the last sight she saw was the shadow of a plain wooden Cross of Calvary, cast athwart the wall by the clear moonlight, and the last sound she heard was the musical chime of the bell which called all watchers to prayer. She

slept the deep sleep of a young, healthy, and tired creature; the same gentle chime breaking the stillness as a summons to Prime failed to disturb her. But she knelt by Agnes Ingram's side once more at Matins; and sat at the long table spread with a plain breakfast at what appears to us the very early hour of seven of the clock. Then she donned her own clothes, now carefully dried and brushed; took a grateful farewell of the household of Goodrest, and a loving one of Agnes Ingram; and set forth for Whiteoaks, attended by a servant whom Madam Pettigrew had sent to be her convoy.

One whom Beatrice did not see watched her departure from Goodrest that beautiful April morning. The sky was clear after much rain; and the dainty figure of Mistress Beatrice Cope seemed to attract the brightness of the sunbeams, as she stepped along in her pretty tasteful attire. At the first curve of the path she turned, to wave a last salutation to Agnes Ingram, who stood before the door, looking after this gay-hearted child whose coming had been to her a great and rare enjoyment.

Re-entering the house a moment later, Agnes found a gentleman, who was a frequent guest there, standing almost at her elbow.

'Yonder lady bears small trace of her up-bringing, Mistress Ingram,' he said.

'She has been very kindly dealt with,' Agnes replied. 'Her life has been all joy, at Crowe Hall. Her words tell much; 'tis the simple heart of a child. I pray Heaven that her good days may be many, and last long.'

'Doubtless you know her parentage?'

'I guessed it, at the first naming of her name.'

'Pardon me—but I knew her father well. Pardon me a question which may seem less than courteous, madam. Did she speak to you of him?'

'Once only, sir. She told me his fate, thereby showing me that my surmise as touching her birth was correct. She also mentioned that her only brother died abroad, some years ago.'

'And, Mistress Ingram, in what manner did she speak of this?—as one whose mind has hardened over the memory of such events?'

'Indeed, no; with great and trembling agitation.'

He bowed, and stood aside.

Agnes went swiftly through the hall, and knelt a few moments in the little chamber where Beatrice Cope had slept.

CHAPTER X.

MISTRESS BEATRICE COPE returned to Whiteoaks with much food for thought. Her hostess questioned her minutely as to all which passed at Goodrest; and she answered cheerfully and pleasantly, yet with a certain reserve. For one cannot speak freely of all things to all people; and Mistress Delia, Beatrice felt, could scarcely be in harmony with much which seemed to her beautiful and touching in the life of which she had had a transitory but never-to-be-forgotten glimpse. She kept the memory of Goodrest in her heart as a dream of peace; and Madam Pettigrew's parlour seemed less dull and her flow of words less wearisome, when her young companion thought for a moment of Agnes Ingram.

Yet that parlour, with its dim neutral tints and its lack of warm human interest, was terribly dull in these April days; and Beatrice longed sorely for a sight of Bessie Hunter, and one deep breath of the free air of Crowe Hall. Bessie wrote Beatrice a

letter, and sent her a token, by each waggon which passed from Thistlethwayte to Whitecross; but she did not come to Whiteoaks, for ten or twelve miles of road and heath formed a strong barrier of severance betwixt female friends in those days. And the boys were busy with their own diversions; so that the hours went swiftly with them, and they almost forgot to wonder how the time sped with Beatrice, although they had one and all been loth to see her go away.

Mistress Delia, meanwhile, was very fairly pleased with her young guest. Beatrice Cope was gentle and passive under these depressing conditions; sweet-tempered, too, and obliging, even when her patience was somewhat tried. She proved herself a very paragon of listeners; since Mistress Delia was slow to perceive that thoughts might stray even while brief answers came at due intervals. Sometimes, however, Beatrice listened with eager attention; for Madam Pettigrew, as has been said, liked to talk of Goodrest, and to compare such details as she could glean from Beatrice with those other details of the life there which were matter of common gossip and report.

If the mistress of Whiteoaks knew anything of the political intrigues carried on at Goodrest, she had just sufficient discretion to make slight mention

of them. Her own brother had had leanings towards the Stuart cause—leanings which prudential considerations suppressed with difficulty. Therefore Mistress Delia spoke tenderly of the Templars, as having been 'unfortunate'; and dwelt upon Goodrest as a species of nunnery rather than a place for the laying of schemes and the transmission of gold to France. In truth, it bore both characters, separate and distinct; but in the hamlet of Whitecross, and under Madam Pettigrew's roof, the former aspect of the house was the one brought forward and commented upon.

The ladies worked many cures upon sick people, and did many acts of kindness among the poor. As for Mr. Templar, Mistress Delia said, he might look in upon his old home from time to time, very privately; but 'twas well known that he, as a banished man, must spend the most part of his life abroad. And she abstained from asking Beatrice whether she had had speech of the master of the house during her short sojourn at Goodrest.

'There are things it is not well to know,' Mistress Delia said; but she looked at Beatrice with an inquisitive eye the while, and the girl fancied that unsolicited information would please her well. Beatrice, however, was reticent, and made no mention of Mr. Templar.

One afternoon, when all that could be said concerning Goodrest had been said with much amplitude, and the subject was losing some of its freshness even for Beatrice Cope, an incident occurred which restored the drama of her own personal life to animation and vigour once more.

Mistress Delia had been summoned to the still-room to grant an interview to a farmer's wife with whom she had dealings in the matter of eggs and cream-cheese; and Beatrice, declining an invitation to be present at their conference, and thus hear at first hand that news of the village which she must inevitably hear over again from her cousin, sat alone in the parlour towards three of the clock. She took advantage of the opportunity to open the window, Mistress Delia being no friend to fresh air; and sat leaning out, enjoying the scent of the budding sweet-briar close by, and wondering whether the cowslips were yet showing golden heads in the Home Croft at Crowe Hall.

Beatrice was growing a little paler than usual at Whiteoaks, and her lips and brow wore a shade of pensiveness when in repose. To a young man now walking round the house from the stables, her very attitude seemed listless. But there was no listlessness in the start with which Mistress Beatrice Cope recognized this new-comer; and her paleness was gone in an instant, vanquished by the beautiful

carnation tint imparted by joyful surprise. For this handsome young gentleman, booted and spurred from a long ride through deep country, was none other than Sir Raymond Forrest of Drumscour, now commanding a gallant troop of horse quartered at Berwick upon the Border.

Mistress Beatrice was mightily pleased to see Sir Raymond, as was natural, considering their early intimacy and lately revived companionship; and Sir Raymond, on his side, evinced a very great contentment and satisfaction when he found himself in her presence once more.

And surely 'twas a fortunate chance which kept Madam Pettigrew long in the still-room in discourse with Farmer Matcham's dame that afternoon. Had she known that a guest awaited her in the south parlour, she would have broken off her chat at once; but by one of those happy accidents which now and then facilitate the course of true love, she did not know. The fairy prince walked in at the open window, instead of rousing the echoes of Whiteoaks by an application to the heavy knocker in the courtyard. And with him he brought the glamour which makes radiant the fairyland of youth—the strange, foolish, unreal ecstasy of first love—the magic of a dream never, perhaps, to be fulfilled, yet always remembered even in old age.

Somehow the brief separation had worked a great change in the relation between these two. They met again with a certain eager diffidence on his side, and instinctive shyness on hers, which altered the whole character of their intercourse. Raymond's eyes spoke a language easy to be understood, as they dwelt ever more and more earnestly upon the face of Mistress Beatrice Cope; and Beatrice, while they talked of Crowe Hall with sudden pauses, and a whole world of unacknowledged feeling lying beneath the slight phrases they used, wished that this blissful hour could last for ever.

By and by Raymond Forrest asked what Mistress Beatrice did, all through the long day at White-oaks?

Upon this she told him the tenor of her unvarying days; and presently mentioned, as the one salient point of interest, the protracted ramble which had ended in her spending a night among the religious ladies of Goodrest. Beatrice recounted her little history gaily; and because 'twas not convenient to be always meeting the eloquent eyes which watched her every look and gesture, the lovely frank regard of her dark gray orbs was somewhat averted as she talked.

Raymond Forrest heard the tale nearly to an end in silence, the crimson blood mantling even to the

curls of the close brown periwig, with which, in accordance with the fashion of the time, he thought proper to supersede his own far handsomer hair. At last, however, he could control himself no longer; and he burst out into a somewhat impetuous protest.

'Beatrice! Madam!' he exclaimed. 'Did you but know one half of the mischief which has been hatched at Goodrest in times past, and is hatching there now, you would speak and think of the place after another fashion. 'Tis a very nest of treachery and intrigue. Nay, I mean no disrespect to the religious ladies; I simply wish that they dwelt there alone. And were I a man of power sufficient to work single-handed in such an enterprise, I would soon do Mr. Templar to wit that no nominal compliance with a certain sentence once passed upon him should serve his turn. I would rid the country of him, and many another like him. And I would have no beguiling of honourable gentlewomen—no catching of their fancy with the fair outside seeming of a devout life, while behind the screen of much true piety stands chicanery, and sedition, and——'

'Tis hard to say what else the fiery young man might have added, being now fairly launched in mid-career of eloquence; for Beatrice interrupted him at this point, and his disquisition was not allowed to reach its period.

'There was no beguiling,' she said, with spirit. 'There was naught save Christian charity and womanly tenderness, Sir Raymond Forrest.'

Raymond Forrest rose up from his seat; and whereas he had been very red a few moments before, he was uncommonly pale now, and there was an odd strained look in his eyes, and a tightness in the movement of his lips.

'Beatrice!' he said; and his voice too was husky and changed. 'Your heart is with these people; they have cast a spell over you, and bewitched you. Years ago I warned your uncle; I warn you now, as I see you before me a woman grown. But I might as well speak to the westerly wind, when it blows wild over the Black Scaur; I might as well——'

'Nay, now you are angered,' said Mistress Beatrice Cope.

She had a wondrous pretty pleading way with her, when she would fain mollify an offended friend.

'Angered!' the young man cried; and then, with haste and impetuosity, as his manner was, he dropped upon his knees beside her chair.

'Angered, dear heart!' he said.

There was silence in the south parlour after this —silence, through which Beatrice plainly heard the singing of a thrush in the garden, and felt the

fluttering of her heart against the silken lace which fastened her bodice. Then came a few low half-whispered words; and the thrush sang softly, hesitating in his glad strain, as one in doubt. Then silence again; and the sweet notes without the casement fell uncertainly, like scattered pearls from a broken string.—And then, although no answering words were spoken, the little white hands made a tremulous movement, and the strong brown ones clasped them in no doubtful clasp; and the gray eyes met the hazel ones, and did not shrink or droop.

And outside, in the sunny garden, the thrush broke forth into a very flood of song, rejoicing in the gladness of his little life, in the joyous blossoming time of all the earth.

CHAPTER XI.

THUS Mistress Beatrice Cope was wooed and won, despite precautions on the part of old Madam Hunter at Crowe Hall. And thus, in few words but with a very great earnestness, a loyal subject of King George gave his sure troth to a Jacobite's daughter; and she made answer with a faltering voice and a steadfast mind. They both spoke the same short phrase,—'For ever.'

Madam Pettigrew was well pleased to find Sir Raymond Forrest awaiting her on her return from her discourse with Janet Matcham. She slightly rebuked her young friend, Mistress Beatrice, for scrupling to disturb the important colloquy in the still-room; and then pressed the unexpected guest to taste a dish of tea ere starting upon his homeward ride.

Sir Raymond accepted the proffer with much alacrity; and he discussed the news of the country-side with the elder lady, until a little bustle attend-

ant on the entrance of the tea-equipage enabled him to change his place, the better to inquire into the progress of Mistress Beatrice Cope's embroidery work. The carved frame wherein Beatrice wrought her shepherds and shepherdesses, her woolly lambs decked with blue ribbons, and her baskets of impossible fruit and flowers, occupied one of the windows; and in this window, at an uncomfortable angle of the curving seat, Raymond Forrest preferred to seat himself, when he had handed the fragrant dishes of tea with ceremonious grace. He seemed to enjoy Madam Pettigrew's conversation, and her excellent tea, with a heartiness which she could not but consider flattering; yet he and Beatrice found very little to say to each other, and their hostess fancied that they did not get on well together.

When Sir Raymond did at length take leave, Mistress Delia commented upon Beatrice's slowness to contribute her due share to his entertainment.

'Young people should acquire the art of conversation betimes,' Mistress Delia said, with the proud consciousness of possessing a tongue which never tired.

At this Beatrice blushed the beautiful blush wherein the fairest dream of early youth finds expression; a blush in which there is neither suffering nor shame. And while Mistress Delia talked of

Sir Raymond, praising his handsome face and his polished manner, and blaming her silent auditor for dulness and reserve in such company, Beatrice's thoughts flew away on the lightest and airiest pinions, and her heart sang its own secret psalm of thanksgiving.

For he had come to her, whose coming revealed the blank of his absence; and her nature, which was very simple and sweet, responded to this new joy without fear or misgiving. The wonder of it kept her awed and trembling; she was pale that evening, but only with excess of happiness. And she heard all speech as through the medium of a dream, the ear receiving sounds which the brain is not at leisure to interpret. She was a creature of sensitive mould; and this love-dream thrilled her with tender mystery, with vague unfathomable searchings of the heart.

Now, if Madam Pettigrew had chanced to step into the south parlour when Raymond Forrest fell on his knees beside Beatrice Cope, 'tis probable that this veracious history would never have been written. The gentleman would have sought an instant for an imaginary trifle which might perchance have fallen from the lady's work-table; rising from his knees to make his compliments to Madam Pettigrew with a fine colour in his face and much self-possession in speech and gesture. And Beatrice would have sat

very quietly in her corner, scarcely knowing what that interruption meant.

For days, weeks, or months, the young pair might not have reached the same point of feeling again. Their meetings could be but infrequent at Whiteoaks, and were certain to be scrupulously chaperoned by Mistress Delia. At Crowe Hall they could indeed meet often; yet opportunities of confidential speech were rare, in the midst of the large family party there. And thus it might easily have happened that Raymond Forrest's declaration of love should be postponed until certain matters transpired which put courtship and matrimony out of the minds of most North-country folk for a while.

But fortune had favoured Sir Raymond; and he rode home through the country lanes rejoicing yet dubious. He had won his prize; and was at once triumphant, humble, and perplexed. Triumphant, because in such a suit there is always an element of conquest and victory; humble, for where is the true man who does not wish himself truer, nobler, and better, when another life besides his own is yielded to him, to make or to mar; perplexed, because he guessed that this day's work would be a sore vexation to his mother, Dame Alicia.

Raymond did not meditate deferring his marriage until Dame Alicia should become fully reconciled to

the bride of his choice; but he dreaded trouble in this quarter which he might not know how to quell. His wedding would be robbed of half its joy if his widowed mother withheld her approbation; and her prejudices, he knew, were strong and deeply rooted. Old Madam Hunter in her shrewdness, and Raymond by means of that intuitive knowledge which a son sometimes possesses of a parent's nature, arrived at much the same conclusion as touching the manner and persistency of Dame Alicia's opposition. But Raymond hoped to disarm prejudice by the frankness and unreserve of his own communication, supported by the winning charm of the girl soon to become his wife.

His task, however, proved a hard one. Dame Alicia listened in stony silence to her son's words, the deep disappointment which each syllable aroused in her mind only revealed by a tightening of the thin well-cut lips, and a contraction of the high, narrow forehead.

When he had finished his story, there was silence; silence which he broke himself.

'Well, mother?' he said, changing his position as he spoke. 'Well, mother, what do you say?'

'I say nought,' was the uncompromising answer. 'My day is done. Had I been consulted earlier, I might have spoken; now, 'tis idle to waste breath.'

'But you will wish me well, madam, will you not?'

'One may wish that which one little expects. I wish that all blessings may fall to the lot of my only son; yet a hasty marriage is a grievous clog in life. All will be as Mistress Beatrice wills now, I doubt not.'

'Nay, mother,' he said; and he flushed somewhat at the words: 'she is not masterful or exacting. She has played no prominent part at Crowe Hall; she has not been be-praised or flattered. She scarce knows herself for what she is, I think; 'tis so natural to her to come second in all companies.'

With this Dame Alicia's smothered anger broke forth.

'At Crowe Hall!' she said, repeating her son's words bitterly. 'I thought to welcome a bride from Crowe Hall—one who could take her place as I took mine thirty years ago. I would have grudged her nought; even the diamonds your father gave me on my marriage-morning should have been hers, when her day came round. And now you have passed over Anne Hunter, to seek out Beatrice Cope. 'Tis vastly well, sir; you are your own master, and must make your own choice. Only, I beg of you, spare me the mortification of congratulating you upon it.'

'Mother, I have passed over no one,' said the

perplexed young man, in some confusion. 'My cousin Anne, I assure you, has no thought of me. I could not win her, if I would—I would not, if I could. Anne is my very dear sister; with Beatrice 'tis different. She is no drop's blood akin to us, being but the niece of my aunt's husband; and there be many that like not marriages betwixt first cousins. 'Tis better, I think, to extend one's connection somewhat; and the Copes, you know, come of a good Derbyshire family.'

'Ay,' said Dame Alicia, very grimly. 'You will doubtless benefit much by alliance with that family. A family of proved loyalty and discretion, as I have heard, and by no means addicted to secret service and Jacobitical treachery. There was once an idle tale concerning this lady's father—how ran it?—let me think. 'Twas said he lost his head for murderous conspiracy in the last year of King William; but belike 'twas slanderously asserted, and the gentleman lived and died quietly in the rocky dales of Derbyshire. Your bride, 'tis certain, is very finely connected, Raymond; and the memory of your father-in-law will prove a source of pride. 'Tis pity she is dowerless. Maybe, however, you are over-rich yourself to think upon that.'

Raymond Forrest was not rich, his estate being somewhat encumbered by family charges, and further

impaired by extravagant living on the part of his father in early life.

He winced again, as his mother sent home her well-aimed shaft.

'There are better things than wealth,' he said. 'My mind is made up. I am grieved to pain and disappoint you, mother; but you will love Beatrice, if you do but give her and yourself fair play. She is of a passing sweet disposition,' he added, with the pride of a man much in love.

Dame Alicia, however, would say no pleasant word, and hold out no prospect of aught beyond the stoniest acquiescence. Such sympathy as Sir Raymond obtained came from his sisters. Ermine and Winifred Forrest were handsome and striking young women, who had seen the world, having had opportunities not vouchsafed to the more rustic damsels at Crowe Hall. Winifred had been 'in waiting' at the Court of Queen Anne; and Ermine stayed much with a married sister at Kensington, whose husband was well-known among the wits who frequented White's Coffee House. The sisters had lively minds, and much facility in dress and conversation. They were greatly admired at Crowe Hall, where they appeared from time to time like shining meteors. Ermine and Winifred liked the Hunter cousins, who admired them so heartily; and they liked Beatrice Cope also,

making no distinction between her and Bessie. They were somewhat surprised at their brother's choice, it is true; but, as they had no wish to offend him, they kept this surprise to themselves.

Winifred said to Ermine that, after all, Beatrice Cope had more of the 'belle air' than their cousin Anne could pretend to; and Ermine answered with the faintest shrug of her shoulders that 'twas a thousand pities Raymond had not made better use of his eyes during his sojourn in London-town.

The sisters knew well how to please the young head of the family; and they proffered a few pretty compliments respecting his bride-elect, preparing themselves to be mighty gracious to Mistress Beatrice during their residence at Drumscour, which was never over-long. Perhaps in their own minds they were not ill-pleased that their brother should have chosen such a little simple thing to share his dignities.

They listened with respectful sympathy to the lamentations of their mother, and tried to console her by hinting that Beatrice Cope, at all events, would be an inexpensive wife.

'She cares not for finery, nor for costly diversions,' said Winifred. 'Give her but a pony to ride, and a flower-garden to order, and the summit of her wishes is reached at once. 'Tis needless to make much pre-

paration for her here. She will take things as she finds them, and be more than content.'

'Raymond does not speak of any alterations,' said Ermine. 'When young Lord Lambswold married Lady Betty Carmichael, a year ago, 'tis said he half ruined himself in paint and tapestry, and silken hangings. The estate will scarce recover the outlay these ten years; and although Lady Betty has money, 'tis tied up tight, so that my lord can make small use of it. My brother is wiser than Lord Lambswold, madam.'

Dame Alicia groaned.

'Your brother is not utterly mad,' she said. 'He sees that since he chooses to marry beneath him, 'tis more decent and becoming to do the thing cheaply, and without ostentation.'

'Dear madam,' said Ermine, ''tis surely wise to make the best of what cannot be helped. 'Twill never occur to any one that my brother derogates from his position in wedding Beatrice Cope, unless you yourself suggest the idea. She comes of gentle parentage, and has been bred up in our uncle's house as a fourth daughter. 'Tis only by the withholding of your countenance that the tongues of the gossips may be set wagging.'

Dame Alicia Forrest paid more heed to the words of her daughter Ermine than to those of any other

person. Ermine had a quiet firm way of enunciating her opinions which gave much weight to what she said; and she derived additional prestige from the fact that her prudence had been tested on several occasions, and had not been found wanting. Her mother perceived that gossip would, as Ermine said, be the only outcome of sustained opposition on her part; and she changed her attitude slightly, disliking her son's proposed marriage as much as ever, but ceasing to make any talk against it.

Squire Hunter was somewhat disturbed in his mind when the true state of affairs dawned upon him. The idea that Beatrice might be a less welcome bride than Prue or Bessie did not at first occur to the honest gentleman, so entirely had his orphan niece secured her place in his parental affection. His first pleasure in Sir Raymond Forrest's proposal as touching the hand of Mistress Beatrice Cope, was without alloy; for lurking remembrances made him dimly aware that early marriage to a man in good position would be the safest and best lot for his niece. He was in no haste to part with his own daughters; but he felt that Beatrice's establishment in life was a thing to be desired. Therefore he was surprised to find that his own wife, Beatrice's loving aunt, received the news of Raymond Forrest's courtship with some nervousness of manner; while old

Madam Hunter looked upon her son as though he were the bearer of very evil tidings.

When the tale was fully told, the younger lady said,

'I fear me Dame Alicia will be ill pleased;' and the elder lady asked,

'Did the lad mention his mother, Maurice?—How does she regard this judicious project of his?'

The Squire was forced to confess that Raymond had said nought of Dame Alicia.

'But 'tis like enough she will be gratified,' he said. 'She has ever shown a kindness towards our lasses; and I gave Raymond to understand that little Beatrice will have her portion with the rest. He knew that without my telling him, I reckon; but 'twas best to leave no doubt. I dare to say we shall have Dame Alicia over here to-morrow, Anna, all agog to express her satisfaction in person; so be ready to receive her as is beseeming.—Well, well! To think that the first marriage in the family should be little Beatrice's; and she such a small hop-o'-my-thumb but t'other day, as 'twere. I am glad, and yet sorry too; and if Dame Alicia shows aught but pleasure, I shall hold myself mightily affronted. Lucy's daughter and my niece is good enough to wed with a Forrest of Drumscour, I warrant me, for as high as they hold their heads.'

Madam Hunter made no further remark to her son; but when he had left the room she opened her mind to her daughter-in-law.

'Anna,' she said, 'it needs no wizard to see that Maurice is neither to hold nor to bind in this matter. We have done our best to avert trouble, you and I. But what must be, must be. Raymond Forrest has made his offer, though how he found space of silence in which to do it at Whiteoaks passes my wit to discover. I would trust Delia Pettigrew with few tasks; yet assuredly a tongue like hers should do yeoman's service once in a while, and I put faith in it as a clapper to scare suitors away.—Nevertheless, Raymond has made his offer, by hook or by crook; and Beatrice has given him her little foolish heart. And her uncle's formal consent has been asked and obtained; and now there will be a pretty to-do if Dame Alicia speaks slightly of the young lady, or fails to esteem the honour of the connection. The matter must go forward now, at all costs; else we shall have the cut-and-thrust business played in grim earnest between our fiery Tom and Raymond Forrest, on some frivolous pretext or other, one of these fine mornings. Wherefore Beatrice must fulfil her weird, and dree her penance, lest worse come of it.'

'She is happy enough now, poor child,' said young

Madam Hunter, taking heart of grace to rejoice a little, since 'Granny' received the news of the failure of her scheme thus calmly.

But the old lady was thinking very deeply; and she made no response to her daughter-in-law's words.

CHAPTER XII.

DAME ALICIA FORREST did not appear at Crowe Hall for several days after the betrothal was duly ratified. Her son, she repeated, was his own master; he had chosen to take his own course without consulting her, and she saw not that her acquiescence in what he had done need be blazoned abroad. The Hunter family, doubtless, were rarely pleased; 'twas best she should remain at Drumscour for awhile, since her mood was scarce attuned to theirs.

At last, however, Ermine's urgency prevailed. Ermine knew how to hint that 'tis a sad want of taste to allow family quarrels to become manifest; that among the old noblesse in France, of whom she had heard much speech at Kensington, 'tis a point of breeding to mask much bitterness with the outward forms of respect and courtesy. 'Our own royal family,' said Ermine, 'had fallen into the "bourgeois" error of making all differences public; and see what came of it!—what loss of dignity, what loss of public

esteem. We greatly needed a reformation in our manners in high places; and if no other good came back with the direct Stuart line, maybe some polish and dignity might revert to Old England in the train of the Chevalier. Little enough of these commodities came with the Elector from Hanover,' she added, carelessly.

'Ermine!' said Dame Alicia, sternly, 'there is no talk of the coming of the Pretender, at Kensington, surely?'

'There is much talk, madam; but 'tis agreed on all hands that the moment is lost. The moment came, but not the man. And now the Jacobite gentry may whistle down the wind for a chance gone by. Such strange lack of enterprise, in good sooth, may make one believe their cause doomed for evermore. . . . Yet 'tis pity, in some sort. The manners, and the dresses, which came in with this German Court!'—and Ermine's graceful shoulders made a little movement indicative of French training. 'Eh! 'tis enough to tempt the staunchest Hanoverian and soundest Protestant to cast a longing eye in the direction of St. Germains.'

With such flippancy as this Dame Alicia could have naught in common; and she repressed it severely, even in her favourite daughter. But Ermine's previous words had sunk deeply into her

mother's mind; and Dame Alicia's tone and manner were swayed by them, when she did at length pay her compliments to the ladies of Crowe Hall. Towards her sister-in-law she was cold and frigid as ice, admitting none of the cheerful talk of countless small arrangements in which women delight when a wedding is in prospect. Towards the Squire she was bland and formal; to old Madam, in her ingle-nook, reserved and uncommunicative.

And little Beatrice, the trembling bride-elect, shrank from the cold recognition which Dame Alicia vouchsafed her; from the embrace in which no tenderness dwelt; and from the smile which was more chilling than any frown. She shrank; and alas! her shrinking was perceived.

Dame Alicia felt her power over Beatrice Cope, as the girl's face quivered and her eyelids drooped; and the sense of power aroused in her no generosity of feeling, but rather an irritability which, like coarser forms of cruelty, grows by indulgence.

Bessie Hunter, in a similar case, would have looked her future mother-in-law full in the eyes, with a merry defiance half hidden beneath decorous respect; and Dame Alicia, after many a trial of strength, would have come to like good-tempered, straight-forward Bessie, even had her maiden-name been Cope.

But Beatrice was of different, and maybe finer, stuff. The keenest edge is ever the most easily blunted; the most exquisite harmony approaches nearest to discord. You may throw down an earthenware pitcher, and yet carry it many a day to the well: drop a Sèvres teacup ever so gently, and the chances are ten to one that you can make no further use of it. And thus, in this puzzling world of ours, natures vary; and a certain toughness of fibre conduces to comfort, in threading the thorny thickets which enclose every earthly joy.

Beatrice had had her perfect hour at Whiteoaks, and her days of dreamy happiness since; but this one day, which should have been very bright, was certainly unpropitious.

CHAPTER XIII.

MEN were beginning to whisper strange things concerning 'The Pretender' and his French allies, when Sir Raymond Forrest, who held a captain's commission in the service of His Majesty, King George, commanded a fine troop of horse quartered at Berwick. The continued silence of the Jacobite party in Scotland boded ill, it was said; and hints of high hopes and dark secret plottings flew about from one country-house to another.

Old Madam Hunter kept her ears open, and gathered up every such hint which she happened to hear. Chance guests at Crowe Hall would now and then say a cautious word or two which showed the astute old lady how the wind set. The regular troops, scattered in handfuls up and down the Border country, were on the alert, Madame Hunter could perceive; on the alert, yet quite dubious what to expect.

As Ermine Forrest said, the auspicious moment

was past and gone; and yet 'twas plain that the fire out of sight did but smoulder.

In the spring of this year, 1715, though much was possible, nothing seemed imminent; and Sir Raymond spent much of his time at Drumscour instead of at Berwick. Thence he rode over to Crowe Hall, even more and more frequently, dreaming dreams of his own with which neither Hanoverian nor Jacobite politicians had any concern.

And Mistress Beatrice Cope was exceedingly happy in those days, feeling that the crown and joy of her life had come to her. She had been very kindly treated at Crowe Hall, and gentle affection had not failed her; yet never, since a period so distant as to be almost forgotten, had she known the bliss of being first in any one's heart. Now Raymond Forrest's love was poured out at her feet without stint or measure; and notwithstanding Dame Alicia's coldness, her whole nature responded joyously.

Ermine and Winifred Forrest were cordial and kind; though perhaps with a touch of condescension somewhat too apparent in their kindness. For they were much older than Beatrice Cope, and had seen the world; while she had only the homely training of Crowe Hall to trust to, when her own quick wit and pretty grace were at fault under new and

unfamiliar circumstances. The sisters felt that they could not have much in common with this unformed little creature; but they told their brother that she would soon acquire the air of a great lady, when skilfully painted, powdered, and patched.

She was very splendid at a great ball which the Forrest family—Dame Alicia sorely reluctant, but over-persuaded by her daughters—gave in honour of the betrothal. And she was doubtless much admired; since, when the year of forty-five came round, elderly gentlemen still remembered the beauty and radiance of Mistress Beatrice Cope.

Yet Raymond Forrest thought she never looked prettier than when she came to meet him in her simple gown of flowered chintz, with no touch of powder in her dark hair, or of rouge upon the delicate cheeks, which had a soft tint of their own at such moments with which art could not compare. In the garden at Crowe Hall, or seated at the harpsichord in the shadows of the White Parlour, she was ever loveliest in his eyes; although he liked her to shine magnificent among the gayest, when need was.

Beatrice was much preoccupied during the few weeks which preceded her formal betrothal to Raymond Forrest; and therefore took small heed of a change in her uncle's establishment which might

else have seemed important. For a stranger appeared at Crowe Hall that spring, breaking the cheerful monotony of the Manor-house with a little stir of fresh topics and interests brought from the outside world and from a distant country. This stranger came by invitation, being well-accredited by Mr. Hunter's most trusted correspondent in Holland as a fit person to undertake the office of secretary to himself in his Justice business and other affairs, and also to act as tutor to his younger boys, who were of an age to require better instruction than could be found for them in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Vanburgh, accordingly, arrived from Holland; and proved to be a middle-aged man of grave and reserved manners, and singular taciturnity, perfectly understanding the duties he had undertaken, and apparently desiring to hold little intercourse with any member of the family beyond that which these duties necessitated. He wore a Geneva gown and bands, thus proclaiming himself a Calvinistic minister of some description; but he said he had resigned the direct exercise of his profession, finding his talents better adapted to fill such a post as he proposed to occupy at Crowe Hall.

Mr. Hunter was delighted with his secretary, whose useful qualifications were much to his mind.

The boys were less delighted with their tutor, but their opinion was not particularly inquired into. The rest of the family regarded Mr. Vanburgh with some curiosity at first, and then accepted him as rather an uninteresting factor in their daily life; until Beatrice Cope made a discovery concerning him which changed all things to her, though no one knew of that which she suddenly discovered.

She was so happy in Sir Raymond Forrest's affection as to have small thought to spare for aught else; but ere long the time came that the Captain must rejoin his regiment, and give his mind to military duties, while Beatrice returned from fairy-land to common earth once more.

Their parting over, she stood at an upper window watching with somewhat tearful eyes for his last wave of the hat before the thick evergreens on the rising ground hid him from sight.

'And what will you do now, Beatrice? Are you going to mope and moan from this to Michaelmas?' asked a laughing voice; and Beatrice turned to find that her dejected appearance was affording amusement to Bessie Hunter, who had not at all a sentimental tendency of mind.

Beatrice laughed, and dried her eyes.

'By no means,' she said. 'I intend to be busy. My education, I find, is vastly incomplete, sweet Bess.

Dame Alicia Forrest said to Prue the other day that I must be a poor two-fingered thing, because I could not make spun sugar when she asked me. Prue must teach me all she knows; it does not please me to be thought a poor two-fingered thing. I shall learn plain needlework from you, Bess, so I pray you prepare to set me tasks. Prue tells me Dame Alicia says my stitchery is disgraceful; though my embroidery, she owns, may pass muster. And besides all this, I mean to read books and improve my mind; for Cousin Frank credibly assures me that they think me very ill-informed at Drumscour. Also, I shall not race about the park all through the summer days with Bustle and Bounce and little dog Fairy, but shall cultivate a sedate demeanour, and sit much at home; for Frank likewise informs me that Raymond Forrest's sisters say I am too young and too childish to make a good wife.'

'Upon my word, you have reason to hold yourself mightily indebted to Frank and Prue for their information!'

'Truly, have I not? It furnishes me with occupation for the present, you see. I shall scarce be perfect in confectionery and needlecraft by Michaelmas, I fear; and as to the improving books—good lack, their chance is small! But there is no time like the present: I shall go and choose the books I intend to

read now, at this very moment, while I feel somewhat grave in mood. Prithee, don't laugh when I run over my list to Ermine Forrest, good Bess; take it as a matter of course that I read such literature, if you love me. Come now, and advise with me concerning titles of due gravity and weight. I love to do things thoroughly whilst I am about them; and if one has a doubt about getting to the end of a book, why, the title is a matter of greater moment than ever, in that case, you understand.'

'I understand perfectly; but you must choose your books alone, if you choose them just now. I bethink me that I left dried rose-leaves and spice spread out in no small disorder in the still-room. Hark! I hear mother call me. She knows well 'twas neither Anne nor Prue who left such signs and tokens behind.'

Bessie hurried away, aware that a well-deserved reproof awaited her. And Beatrice, after one more lingering look in the direction in which her lover had disappeared, and a little sigh which she would not willingly have had overheard by her mirthful companion, turned from the casement, and sought the west-room where the books of the family were stored in silence and stillness seldom broken from year's end to year's end.

Some bygone Hunter must have loved books better

than any member of the present generation seemed like to do; for the walls of the library were panelled with row upon row of calf-bound volumes, together with some very ponderous tomes not easily lifted from their abiding-places.

The sun was beginning to sink in the western sky, and the room was full of vivid light and black shadowy corners. Beatrice, coming suddenly into the flood of light, did not see that some one was seated at a writing-table away from the window; and went to the bookshelves at once, believing herself alone. Though she had been saddened for a moment, her mind was full of happy thoughts; and as she examined the books she sang, softly yet blithely, a very joyous song:

'Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft,
To give my love good-morrow!——'

She had scarce begun a second stanza, when a person unobserved rose quietly from the shadow, and came towards her, saying in low tones,

'My child, do you not remember me?'

'Mr. Vanburgh?' she replied, faltering—doubting—trembling a little in her uncertainty.

'I do indeed bear that name at present,' the low

voice said; 'but to you I am at all times—Roger Sandiland.'

This answer was spoken in tones still more carefully subdued; and a silence succeeded, during which Beatrice's heart beat fast, and speech was impossible to her.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. SANDILAND stood in the deep shadow, Beatrice Cope in the sunlight, while they gazed upon each other silently; it might have been an impersonation of stern relentless fate which thus abruptly confronted the joyous young girl.

'I see that you have forgotten me,' said Mr. Sandiland, at last. 'Tis scarce to be wondered at; I should have remembered that the years which are few to me are many to you. But your countenance is little altered since the day I brought you here as a child. You promised to be like your father then, and the likeness has developed—that is all. Yet I would far rather have traced the likeness in character and feeling than in person, if so it might have been.'

His voice in speaking this sentence touched some reassuring chord: the pale tremor and sorrowful clouding passed away from the youthful face, which was in an instant all aglow with very different feelings.

'Ah, no! I pray you, do not think so ill of me! I have not forgotten,' exclaimed Beatrice, putting out both her hands.

All dread was for the moment banished in that flash of recognition—that reawakening of childish associations and confidence; the real seemed to take the place of vague uncertainties. She feared no future just then to which that voice might beckon her; the last friendly voice which had spoken with her father on that awful evening long ago.

Mr. Sandiland took her hands in his, and bent his head to touch them with his lips. He was greatly changed in appearance by the years which had flown; his head was gray, and his face deeply lined. Care and apprehension had alike set their seal upon the strong features; yet there was a certain nobility in their expression—the nobility of a concentrated aim.

One aim and one desire had indeed long since mastered all others with Roger Sandiland; he lived only to restore the kingdom to the son of his banished sovereign. And yet even he, all-absorbed though he was, felt a thrill as he looked upon Beatrice Cope, a young girl standing on the threshold of life, holding out trusting hands, and smiling. One more young life dragged into the treacherous whirlpool! One more soul taught to stake its earthly happiness on a dangerous venture!

So the matter must appear to us who look backward upon those days; but to Roger Sandiland came glimpses of radiant promise in the future, though he had no longer the sanguine spirit which was his at five-and-twenty. There had been disappointment enough to weigh that down, in all certainty! He was ready to dedicate himself entirely to a doomed cause, from a stern fatalistic sense of duty; but these gleams of hope made it easier to draw others to the same allegiance, and therefore he strenuously cultivated them. For Beatrice Cope, in especial, he taught himself to hope much; and, after all, he thought, howsoever matters might end, was she not her father's daughter?—was not her portion with those who had loved him?—ay, and with the cause for which he suffered?

Ah! no alien upbringing—no Whig associations—could do away with that inherited likeness to the dead father; a likeness stronger in expression and character, as Mr. Sandiland, in spite of his words just spoken, had weeks ago perceived, than in features.

In person Beatrice now resembled both parents. The dark eyes and wide brows were the only distinctive portion of the Copes; but Roger Sandiland could remember her father with the same impulsive, joyous, variable temperament, stamped upon his

every look and gesture in youth, as upon his daughter's now. How the bright lad had altered before the end came! How deep a melancholy had fixed that changing face to one expression!

Yet Roger Sandiland, who had loved Charles Cope well, refused the warning which this thought should have given.

Mr. Sandiland spoke a few words concerning Lady Dalrymple, who had spent the last years in foreign parts, he said. Then he prepared to leave the room, saying,

'We shall have opportunities of renewing our conversation, doubtless; in the mean time, I need not bid you have a care of your words and looks?'

'Oh, sir! you do not intend remaining here?' Beatrice exclaimed, in dismay. 'That is surely impossible; you cannot purpose that?'

'But I do most certainly so purpose,' he answered, with a grave smile. 'My presence is greatly needed here. Listen, my child. We are now upon the eve of that for which your father laboured in vain. On the eve, said I? Ay, and what if the red streaks of dawn are already glowing in the east? There can be no failure this time, look you; good men and true have toiled and suffered long enough; the time is fully accomplished. I place a great trust in your

hands; I tell you that ere many months have passed away, the King—*our* King—the one rightful Sovereign of this realm, will sit securely on his father's throne. He reigns already, in the hearts of the best and noblest of the land. And until that consummation of which I speak is reached, I must abide in this place.'

'You do not consider,' said Beatrice, with palpitating breath. 'How can I, even for you, play the traitor to my uncle, who has sheltered me and trusted me so long?—Mr. Sandiland, as a man of honour—as a gentleman—I beseech you leave me free of this matter; do not ask me for service I ought not to perform.'

The terrified, perplexed appeal might have been an echo of words her father spoke, with the very shadow of death upon him, in the Tower of London, nearly fourteen years before:

'Let my work and my suffering count for both.'

He had appealed to his friend's mercy concerning the future life of the child dear to each in that overwhelming hour; but Roger Sandiland was a man of one idea—a man to whose mind the end to be attained had many a time sanctified doubtful means employed. He had walked in uncertain ways since he stood in the crowd beneath the scaffold to meet the last glance of that elder friend whose sense of

honour and of truth had ever been stronger than his own; and all else was merged for him now in the crowning effort, the possible triumph.

He spoke again, firm and low.

'It is necessary that I remain here, unrecognized. I call upon you for no secret service; I merely desire —and surely I have a right to require thus much from your father's daughter—that you will not betray me. Very soon, for good or for evil, all will be ended: sure it must be for good, at last!—'Tis not the King's cause alone, though that might well suffice; 'tis the cause of yonder holy Bishops and Priests, who gave up all sooner than swear allegiance to the usurper. They have prayed for us throughout the long struggle.—The Church Herself is with us—how can we fail?—And in the hour of success I will protect this household from all injury which might otherwise chance. I will set your uncle's sons forward under the new government. No harm shall fall upon any one who has showed kindness to you; that I promise, and I have power to make good my words.'

'And if—if——'

'If I were betrayed at this moment?' he said, helping out her hesitation. 'A traitor's doom would surely be mine; there is enough against me to secure that, Heaven knows!' and he smiled again, a strange

smile in which there was no mirth. 'Such a fate would be grievously inconvenient at this juncture. But I have no anxiety on that score. I trust you far more entirely than you trust yourself.—Hark! do I hear steps approaching? We will speak no more of this until the time which even now draws near is upon us. Do not fear,' he added, seeing that she trembled greatly. 'You have but to be silent in this matter.'

Then he was gone; and the steps which had disturbed their conference died away in the corridor. No one entered the room; and Beatrice sank down into the deep window-seat by which she had been standing. Memories of the past came rushing upon her confusedly, as through the medium of a dream. She saw herself a little child again, playing about a gloomy house where no other laughter than hers sounded; and caressed from time to time by a tall gentleman whose features were now obscured to her, but whom she then called 'Dear Father.'

She saw a faint vision of stately sorrowful Aunt Marjorie, whose ways were strange and fitful; and of Mrs. Hawker the waiting-woman, who had been very good to that little child long ago. Then came the remembrance of Mr. Sandiland, her father's truest friend, whom she now understood to have risked much in remaining near him to the last; then a

vision of dreary London streets, and shouting crowds, and of a parting in the Tower.

Strange, the face of her father, which she had striven in vain to recall, came before her for an instant, like a flash of light, as she trembled at the thought of that unrealized parting. The long straight features—the full dark eyes—the melancholy brow—she saw all again; even the very details of dress seemed to pass before her.

Beatrice made no further effort at recollection then: she bowed down her head and wept, overpowered far more by the sudden perception of all her father had suffered than by any thought of her own orphaned childhood. She was little more than a child still; but a woman's instinctive divination awoke in her heart, and she shrank overwhelmed before the comprehension of a father's agony in leaving one little child alone in so bleak a world.

Her tears spent, she rose at last, feeling very weary; and then a great sense of perplexity took possession of her. She had forgotten the difficulties of the present in the remembrance of that far-away past: yet those difficulties were surely very real and oppressive.

Who can doubt how the conflict in that young startled mind ended?

Gratitude and duty to her uncle could not compel

her, she thought, to betray the retreat of her father's friend. Mr. Sandiland had promised that he would protect the Crowe Hall household in the coming hour of the Jacobite victory; and he had spoken as though a protector might be sorely needed then. He had pledged himself to be a shield to the Hunters of Crowe Hall; a guardian friend, instead of a secret enemy; and yet Beatrice determined to watch for a private moment, in which to secure a reiteration of the promise.

She had to face the domestic circle again on the evening of Roger Sandiland's first revelation, with the heavy burden of her secret pressing on her heart. Beatrice knew that her changed looks would be attributed to the recent parting with Sir Raymond Forrest; and she wished—oh, how earnestly!—that that simple natural grief, free from sting, free from perplexity, were all she had to bear. Her aunt and cousins were merciful, that first evening; and did not comment upon pale looks and heavy eyes. But Granny took Mistress Beatrice to task pretty sharply, as her manner was.

'I trust, child, you do not mean to be foolishly lackadaisical,' the old lady said. 'Sure, a parting of a few brief weeks, with a wedding in prospect, is no such grievous matter to deplore!—Look you, I desire to see a bright face about the house; and the finest sentiment is thrown away upon me, my dear, for I

don't understand it. To my thinking a woman, be she young or be she old, should do her duty and keep a cheerful countenance; and with your lackadaisical fine ladies, who would put out the very sun in heaven because they chance to have the vapours, I profess no patience, Mistress Beatrice.'

Beatrice took heart to smile a little; and her smile was particularly sweet and cordial, lighting up her whole face, and brightening the gray eyes which were her chief beauty.

'I am not fantastical, madam,' she said, 'and I never had the vapours in my life. Do you not know me better than that, Granny?'

'Come, that's well said; I have hopes of you, after all,' Madam Hunter replied, releasing the slender hands she held.

But when Beatrice had turned away, the old lady murmured to herself,

'The child has had a shock; 'twas not the sorrow of a simple girl for an absent lover which blanched her face to-night. Had Raymond Forrest aught to say to her in secrecy, I marvel? Did he tell her, perchance, of some boyish love turned aside, which takes the bloom from the offering he lays at her feet? If so, 'twas a mighty unnecessary candour on his part, I take leave to think. A young girl like Beatrice would fain believe herself the first beloved.

Some jewel is gone from the crown of her womanhood, when she hears of a first fancy placed elsewhere; some note is jarred in the melody which has delighted her. Or it may be that they had their first misunderstanding—their first quarrel, even. A slight matter seems great, to one framed as is this granddaughter of mine. The world is a hard school for such as she is, and the thorns of life are sharp and piercing. 'Tis strange, when one's own life-conflict is nearly ended, how vividly one can concern oneself in another conflict just begun!'

Old Madam Hunter sighed, remembering past vicissitudes. She had not taken life and its storms calmly, for hers was an eager and a restless nature. But gentle Anne Hunter read to her of the Rest which remains when all these visible things are passed away; and the holy words soothed Madam, so that she lay down to sleep in tranquillity.

Beatrice Cope, however, lay awake long hours, fearing to close her tired eyes, lest in sleep she should utter some word which might imperil the man who trusted his fate in her hands. She and Bessie, sisters in affection, had shared the same room in childhood, and did so still. Beatrice had never before wished to be without Bessie; but she would have given much to be alone this night. Several times she started up with a throbbing heart and

damp brow, thinking that all was over—that in her uneasy slumber she had spoken out her ill-omened secret, and that Mr. Sandiland must pass by the way her father trod, through her unhappy means. And then, in the pale moonlight or early summer dawn, she looked upon Bessie's sleeping face, so rosy, and pretty, and untroubled, and knew that for this time all was safe. On the last of these occasions, tears came to her relief; and weeping she prayed as best she could for help—for some guiding star to lead her through the labyrinth of her perplexities. After this she slept more quietly, and awoke to find the sun high in the heavens, while Bessie Hunter, ready dressed, and holding a spray of dewy briar-roses in her hand, stood mocking the lateness of her companion's slumbers.

Bessie's cheerful voice banished the gloomy visions of the night. But thoughts of pain came slowly back, dimming the sunshine; and Beatrice's only comfort lay in seeking Mr. Sandiland on the first opportunity, and urging the promise he had given upon his remembrance once more.

'Sir,' she managed to say, 'I am keeping your secret faithfully, as you perceive. I beseech you—I beseech you—promise me that no harm shall come to my uncle's family through your abiding here; for if any such harm does befall, my very heart will break.'

She spoke with a passion of distress which few could have looked upon unmoved; and Roger Sandiland gave the required promise, with a momentary feeling of remorse.

Beatrice grew thinner that summer, and lost much of her pretty bloom, for the secret thus forced upon her keeping burdened her grievously, haunting her mind both by day and by night. Her face became very pale, unless it happened to be over-bright with a feverish and transitory flush; and truly a mental fever did consume the poor child.

The young Hunters, with that merry Bessie at their head, rallied her mercilessly on pining for her absent lover; her aunt, more practical, insisted on her drinking goat's milk and decoctions of bitter strengthening herbs. And Dame Alicia Forrest looked askance upon the girl when they met, and liked not what she saw.

By degrees Roger Sandiland established a strong influence over the daughter of his early friend; little by little, as opportunity served, he revived old memories, and called into life principles which might well be termed hereditary. This he did by dint of speaking only of the past, and never of the future: by dwelling upon the faith, loyalty, and devotion which gave additional consecration to the cause for which many had died, and many more suffered loss

of all things, rather than upon the approaching victory, with its painful confusion and strong severance of closely-knit ties. His words produced their natural effect upon Beatrice's sensitive mind. The principles of her dead father could never be regarded with indifference by her; but on the other side stood those living relations and friends whose kindness had brightened her orphaned lot, and her betrothed lover, to whom her heart was very truly given. No wonder her mind was distracted by a dream-like perplexity.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. SANDILAND seldom spoke with Beatrice Cope alone; seldom directly touched on these matters in his discourse with her. But now and then he would meet her, as though by chance, in the park or in the adjacent lanes; and at such moments he knew how to make five words do the work of many. She saw him constantly, at meals, and in company with the rest of the family; and sometimes, merely because his manner towards her was so very calm and unmoved, she was able to forget the peculiar meaning which his presence had for her, and to smile and talk as one free from care. At other times only a strong effort could enable her to disguise her uneasiness, the mingled tremor and constraint, which made each word difficult to speak, each glance hard to regulate.

Old Madam Hunter watched Beatrice with jealous heed, suspecting some hidden care; and Beatrice dreaded her grandmother's observation, although the

gaze of the penetrating eyes she knew so well had a curiously steadying effect upon her nerves. When Madam Hunter looked her way, all other thought faded in the one recollection that the life of her father's friend lay in the stillness of her tongue, the composure of her face, the steadiness of her faltering nerve. Her conscience did not reproach her with double-dealing then, as at other times.

And so the summer passed away, and that memorable September of 1715 came upon the land. It came with blue skies and glowing autumnal sunshine, ripening the fruit in the walled gardens of Crowe Hall, and lighting up the sombre old house with a blaze of unwonted colour. The corn began to wave golden even on those northern fields; the reaping was beginning in some parts, when there came faint disquieting rumours of disturbance in Scotland. These rumours swelled and grew, creating great alarm throughout the country. This must be a serious matter, men said, when it became known that the Government had sent in haste for the Dutch contingent.

Meanwhile there was great activity among the English troops; and some portion of the regiment in which Sir Raymond Forrest served was sent in detachment into the immediate neighbourhood of Drumscour and Crowe Hall, the border-country being

regarded at that time with special anxiety and watchfulness, since at some point or other along the line the threatened descent of the Jacobites from Scotland would surely be made. The very air seemed full of excitement and alarm; but the tide of agitation nowhere swelled higher than in one little fluttering heart, which knew not how to direct its course in this strange turmoil.

Sir Raymond commanded the detachment; and thus found many opportunities of visiting Crowe Hall without neglect of duty. He did not at first observe any change in Beatrice's spirits, although the delicacy of her appearance caused him an occasional misgiving. Hers was a nature which could cast off its cares; and the delight of his presence had power to restore her to all her former buoyancy. No oppressive thoughts of Mr. Sandiland and the perplexities connected with him ever arose to trouble her, until the last echo of Raymond Forrest's horse-hoofs died away in the distance. Then, indeed, her cares returned upon her; and through many hours of the night she would lie sleepless, tortured by a medley of hopes and fears. If her uncle and cousins rejoiced over the news from Scotland, she trembled for the Jacobites; if they looked grave upon what they heard, she trembled yet more exceedingly for them and for her lover.

Just on the eve of the rising in Northumberland, when rumours flew from one country-house to another, and the local gentry well affected to the established Government scarce knew what to believe as to the proceedings of their neighbours, Mr. Sandiland sought one of those interviews with Mistress Beatrice Cope which she would fain have avoided, had such avoidance seemed to her possible. He requested her to meet him in the nut-walk at sun-down; and Beatrice obeyed, as she was wont. This nut-walk was no very secluded place. Should any of the household chance to stroll that way, they would see nothing strange in finding Beatrice there; while Mr. Vanburgh's comings and goings aroused slight interest at Crowe Hall.

Therefore Beatrice, in her pretty chintz gown and peach-coloured ribbons, tripped along that path in the pleasant evening time without fear of remark; and Mr. Sandiland emerged from the small door which gave entrance to the wing of the house in which the library and his own apartments were situated, as one who does but seek air and refreshment in the cool of the day.

He strolled once or twice up and down the more conspicuous of the grassy walks, bordered by rose and lavender bushes covered with lingering bloom; and then turned aside in the nut-walk,

where Beatrice Cope's light dress fluttered to and fro.

At first it seemed that he had little to say to her; for surely 'twas not in order to remark upon the beauty of the sunset that he had bidden her to meet him there. But Beatrice waited patiently, knowing that Mr. Sandiland did nothing without reason. She did not greatly exert herself to assist his discourse concerning the weather, and fair prospect of the fruit-crops; neither did she seek to dismiss little Bob Hunter, the youngest of the Crowe Hall boys, who came bounding through the nut-alley, and loitered at her side, because he thought that she looked dull and pensive. 'Twas enough to dash any one's spirits, Master Bob opined, to walk alone with the grave Dutch tutor in his Geneva cloak, and to listen to his long words and stiff phrases.

Mr. Vanburgh, however, made short work of Bob, as soon as he deemed it discreet to tire of the young gentleman's attendance. He despatched him on an errand to the house; an errand of no very hopeful nature, as presently appeared. Poor Bob was sent in quest of a certain pocket-edition of Homer, which had been lent by his tutor nigh upon a week ago to the Vicar of the parish, whose classics were somewhat rusty from disuse. Consequently the little Homer lay neither upon the library table nor within

the open shelves; and while Bob hunted wildly from place to place, bemoaning the ill-luck which had turned his steps towards the nut-walk and earned him this troublesome commission, Mr. Sandiland directed Beatrice's course towards the Moss House, where that which he had come out to say might be spoken with least chance of interruption.

This summer parlour was much beloved by the children of Crowe Hall. It stood upon the summit of a steep bank above the nut-walk; and was built of undressed fir-wood, the crevices being stuffed with dry moss, and the floor paved with pebbles arranged in set patterns. The south side was left open, and commanded a beautiful prospect of distant hills. Here the young Hunters had had their cowslip-feasts in spring, and their nut-feasts in autumn; and here Beatrice Cope now seated herself, in the darkest corner of the rough bench. Her companion stood beside the rustic table, on which he leant his hand somewhat heavily.

'You do not remember your brother, Mistress Beatrice?' he said.

Beatrice shook her head.

'I know not whether I ever saw him,' she replied.

'Ah!—but those links you wear are a keepsake from him, are they not?'

'Not a keepsake,' was the answer; and with the words there came a little sigh. 'A memento, rather; for, as you know, sir, my brother is dead.'

'Of the small-pox, at S. Germains, several years ago?'

'Yes, surely; so my uncle told me, one Christmas Eve when I was just sixteen. But why do you question me, sir? You, who know all this as well or better than I do?'

'I question you,' said Mr. Sandiland, 'because mistakes are sometimes made, and deaths which are confidently reported are not invariably proved to have taken place. Your brother Charles, for example, is at this moment alive and well.'

Beatrice started, and her colour ebbed away.

'Alive and well, and desirous to see you,' Mr. Sandiland proceeded, in his even tones. 'The meeting, however, demands caution.—Hark! do I hear voices? Some persons pass this way, it appears.'

The habit of listening and watching for sounds and indications of danger was strong upon Roger Sandiland; and his ears had caught the tones of Sir Raymond Forrest's voice before 'twas audible to Sir Raymond's betrothed bride.

Beatrice's paleness changed to a burning flush, as her lover and her uncle passed along the path below

the Moss House, talking together cheerfully. One of the Squire's dogs, a fine deer-hound which knew Beatrice well, sprang up the steep ascent. Squire Hunter shouted to recall the truant; and a mocking echo took up his jolly hollo, and prolonged it into weird thin cadence; whereat he and Raymond laughed.

As they walked on, and the sound of their steps and voices died away, Beatrice spoke, after the manner of one who has no time to lose.

'My brother?' she said. 'Be brief, sir, I pray, for I shall be missed.'

'Your brother has led a stirring and an adventurous life,' said Roger Sandiland. 'He is still young—but four-and-twenty years of age—yet he has done and seen more than many elderly men. And now his occasions have called him into these parts.'

He paused; and Beatrice looked at him with a mixture of eagerness and alarm.

'My uncle will surely allow us to meet,' she said.

'You do not understand,' Roger Sandiland returned; and he smiled as he spoke—the same smile wherewith he had once declared that he himself had earned a traitor's doom. 'Your brother is in peril, here in England. His only safety lies in the belief

as to his death, which has gained some credence. Were he recognized in this neighbourhood, he, and many another with him, were undone. I endeavoured to dissuade him from holding communication with you until matters shall have adjusted themselves, since in my poor mind the risk attending such communication is too great; but he is determined to have speech with you, at all hazards. Therefore I was forced to seek this interview to-day, to prepare your mind, and lessen inevitable risk. He bid me say that he will linger near the Forester's Ash in the woods to-morrow. Take your own time; go there when you can securely elude observation. Let me see—you sing, very sweetly; yes, yes; that will do. Sing a stanza or two of that song which was upon your lips when I startled you in the library, several weeks ago. It has a catching refrain, and will serve as well as another. When you pause, Charlie will answer you. If he continues the same strain, wait at the trysting-place; if he sings aught else, 'twill signify that you are watched; and you must then walk on without appearing to heed the voice of a stranger. Allow an interval of time to elapse, and return by the same spot. If your brother then begins to sing or whistle the air you sang as you approached before, all is well, and you can pause

and speak with him; if he keeps silence, prying eyes and ears are near at hand, and the meeting must be postponed. Do you grasp my meaning? Much depends upon the due observance of these precautions.'

CHAPTER XVI.

BEATRICE COPE wended her way to the trysting-place next day, in the early afternoon. The woods were very silent at that hour. A drowsy hush brooded over each quiet glade and dingle; the rabbits were asleep in the fern, and the soft coo of the cushat doves only sounded at intervals from the tops of the tall trees. Beatrice's light step fell quite noiselessly upon the moss-grown path she trod. She went straight on, through sunshine and shadow, with the swiftness of one who does not dare to pause. And her face was troubled, for her heart was ill at ease.

The Forester's Ash, so called because a forester had been killed under its boughs in an affray with deer-stealers, stood within the wood not more than three-quarters of a mile from the Hall. A bare space of ground surrounded this tree; and the superstitious minds of country people found a reason for the width

of the circle by saying that where the blood of the murdered man fell, all vegetation had been scorched away for ever.

Not a place to choose for a first meeting between a long-parted brother and sister. Little warmth was ever to be felt there, and the shadows fell black and deep. But the spot possessed the advantage of being generally avoided; and for that reason, probably, Mr. Sandiland selected it in this instance.

Beatrice looked towards the ill-omed tree as she approached, and strained her eyes to penetrate the thick screen of straggling holly-bushes, deep bracken, and low-growing firs and junipers which stretched away behind it. She passed beyond the appointed place; and then came back, beginning to sing in a voice so soft and low as to be audible only to one close at hand, a few lines of the song which Roger Sandiland had appointed as a signal betwixt her and her unknown brother:

'Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft,
To give my Love good-morrow!'

She had scarcely paused upon the note, when a man's voice, rich and musical in quality, took up the strain without hesitation:

'Wake from thy nest, Robin-red-breast,
Sing birds in every furrow;
And from each hill, let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow!'

And almost immediately a young man, soberly dressed in russet-brown, and wearing his cloak drawn over the lower part of his face, according to a fashion much affected just then by gentlemen who had a mind to walk unrecognized, sprang from the thicket, and stood in the midst of the path before her.

Beatrice wavered a moment in her uncertainty; but this apparition in her path showed no doubtfulness, no hesitation.

'So you have forgotten me, little Beatrice!' he cried; and there was a very winning gaiety in the tone of his voice, a bright and ready courtesy in his graceful bearing and manner. 'So you have forgotten me! And I myself, though with less excuse for such oblivion, am somewhat puzzled between past and present. You were scarce two years old when I kissed you last, and father took me down to the London Docks in the dawn of a June morning, and put me on board the *Black-eyed Susan*, with a mixed cargo sorted for Flushing. I was the sole passenger among the bales and hogsheads, I remember; and mighty little I liked my circumstances. Faugh! what a voyage that was!—A thunderstorm

and a squall of wind overtook us at the mouth of the Scheldt, and I prayed that the ship might go to the bottom at once, and have done with it. 'Twas no bad preparation, that, for a life in which many queer shifts have been necessary. The urchin was fairly started in the path the man was by and by to travel.—And how have matters fared with you, little sister of mine? I trust our very Protestant uncle, whose politics bear the true Orange complexion, and whose housekeeping is doubtless conducted according to the graceful German mode, has proved no churlish guardian?'

'Oh, Charles, Uncle Hunter has been more than kind,' said Beatrice, her eyes filling with tears of gratitude and affection. 'There is no difference set between me, and Anne and Prue and Bessie—none whatever. I think Granny is the only person in the house who sometimes dwells upon the thought that I am not a Hunter but a Cope.'

Young Mr. Cope looked at his sister very earnestly, although he carried off the intentness of his scrutiny by means of a pleasant laugh and half-jesting entreaty.

'Call me Charlie, I beseech you, sweet mouse,' he said. 'Upon my faith! you have no notion how passing strange and serious that cognomen "Charles" sounds, as applied to a man hitherto known to friends

and foes as Charlie. I suppose 'tis an inherent want of dignity in my unworthy person which renders my name such a conspicuous misfit. You are the only individual who has voluntarily addressed me as "Charles" since I went on board the *Black-eyed Susan.* And so you have not been metamorphosed into a Hunter yet, Beatrice? How is that?—I would lay a heavy wager that pains have not been spared.'

Beatrice returned her brother's regard; and the full soft gaze of the clear gray eyes thus raised to his face was exceedingly satisfactory to the young man. She loved her uncle's family with the tender affection of a grateful heart; but there was a special fund of love left untouched—that love wherewith a woman cleaves to 'her own people, and her father's house.'

And the coming of this brother, given back to her as from the dead, was a great event in the life of Beatrice Cope.

The sense of thankfulness which filled her heart was very apparent in the next words she spoke.

''Twas a strange heart-break that I felt, when Uncle Hunter gave me your buckle and clasps, and told me I had had a brother, and he too, like my parents, was dead,' she said. 'How should your death have been thus confidently affirmed,

Charlie?—My uncle announced it to me as a fact indisputable.'

'Uncle Hunter was no ways loth to believe that which he heard, I fancy,' Charles Cope said, carelessly. 'He heard the news, doubtless, from Mr. Templar of Goodrest, than whom a slyer old fox does not scout about the country. Reasons existed then, and do still exist, why 'tis desirable that I should be supposed to slumber under a marble slab in the Church of S. Gudule, nigh to the village of S. Germains. Do naught, I beseech you, to disturb that agreeable impression, Beatrice. Roger Sandiland may have told you that I am none too sure of keeping my neck out of reach of a hempen rope, while I linger in this vicinity. I am living snugly at Goodrest just now; a place as compared with which a Quaker's meeting is a lively and attractive scene. And although I verily believe the good Fathers in the Monastery of S. Bernard spend pleasanter and more luxurious days than I do, Mr. Sandiland raised as much opposition to my beguiling the time by seeing you as he could have done had I proposed to look in upon the Elector of Hanover at Whitehall, in a friendly, unpremeditated way. After plotting and planning all one's life, one either grows wildly careless of risk, or else one magnifies danger and exaggerates caution. Mr. Sandiland oscillates

between the two states of mind. Just now he has a prudent fit upon him, and would mew me up at Goodrest, like a linnet in a cage. But the sweet bird has a will of its own, and elects to twitter now and then in the gay green wood.'

'At risk of the forester and the woodman?' said Beatrice.

'Even so,' he replied, gaily.

And then, awaiting no answer, he enticed his sister to speak of herself, drawing her on from point to point, with the address of a man accustomed to extract information without direct questions asked. This unknown Beatrice won upon him greatly; her arch yet shy confidences, the vivid picture she gave him of her up-bringing at Crowe Hall, entertained him so well that the minutes flew upon rapid pinions, as they strolled backwards and forwards beneath the ominous shadow of the Forester's Ash.

Soon they seated themselves upon its gnarled roots, half uncovered where burrowing creatures had scraped away the light loose soil; and Charlie Cope sketched a few striking incidents in his own stirring life, for his listener's edification. He told her of hairbreadth escapes by sea and land; of straits and necessities over which he laughed and made merry. But his face grew grave as he dwelt upon the sufferings of others, neither young nor strong like himself.

He was in this softened mood when Beatrice spoke of the distress which Mr. Sandiland's residence under their uncle's roof occasioned her; and he listened gravely, absently slashing away the bark from the ash-trunk with the point of a small walking-sword which he carried.

'I must be a traitor to my uncle, or a traitor to my father's friend,' said Beatrice. 'Charlie, it is a cruel dilemma. I entreat you, end it for me speedily. Mr. Sandiland does not understand the suffering he inflicts, else surely he would not linger here.'

Young Cope looked up from his idle scoring of the old ash-tree.

'Would he not?' he said. 'You little know Roger Sandiland, if you imagine that any suffering of yours or mine would turn him from his purpose now, Beatrice. And indeed I can scarce blame him. We are but units in a great scheme.'

'What scheme?' asked Beatrice.

'Nay, but I think you know full well,' he replied, and fell to fresh excoriation of the much-jagged bark.

'I believe I do know; and, Charlie, does that knowledge make my position any better, my line of action any clearer? Help me, advise me, you that are my brother. What can I do? Shall I give my uncle any hinted caution? shall I——'

'Not for your life!' he said.

His tone was low, and carefully suppressed, but inflexible as that of Roger Sandiland himself.

'A warning to the Squire now would cost more lives than you can count. Remain dumb, at all hazards; leave affairs to take their course; and do not you meddle with perilous stuff, Beatrice. Gunpowder is a harmless commodity when left to lie peaceably in the dark; drop but one spark from the feeblest little rushlight as you pass by, and the inert mass explodes, wrecking heavy masonry, and tearing up strong foundations. This business of ours may come to naught; it may end in smoke, as many a fair prospect before has ended. But if it prospers, it will prosper completely. Should three parts of our contingent redeem their pledges, Squire Hunter may have reason to rejoice that Roger Sandiland abode under his roof this summer; and still greater reason to rejoice that he and his have shown kindness to the sister of——'

He broke off with a smile.

'Shall I tell you my title, little Beatrice? Ah, 'tis pinchbeck all, at present; I care not for it. But one day 'twill be a genuine honour, to be prized by those who come after me as having been won by good service, toil, and blood.'

His eye lightened; there was no lack of dignity or purpose in his look just then, although as a rule

he seemed to affect a slightly whimsical carelessness. He was a man of fair complexion, fine features, and a singularly attractive address—good points of which 'tis probable he was well aware, having estimated their value ere boyhood was over; and the impression he produced upon his sister was very favourable.

His talk delighted her; his evidence of affectionate interest in her welfare was still more gratifying. And before the young pair parted, Beatrice had heard much of Agnes Ingram, towards whom her heart ever turned, and of whom Charlie now spoke with a curious reserved appreciation, in which there was no small element of reverence.

'They are very holy women, those at Goodrest,' he said. 'Truly, this Cause of ours embraces a strange medley. They see a different side of things to that which usually greets my eyes; and astonish me often by the quiet simplicity wherewith they assume that men of action look upon affairs even as they do from within their sheltering walls. . . . I doubt they will be amazed one day, when the time of triumph comes. They will flutter dazzled in the sunshine; and wish, maybe, for their peaceful days of obscurity once more.'

'But Agnes has a father?' said Beatrice, wistfully.

'A father?—yes!—but one with whom she will scarce be very happy. Sir Hugh Ingram is a man of insatiable ambition. His Majesty will not find it easy to content Sir Hugh,' Charlie replied, a sarcastic smile curling his short upper lip.

'And she spoke of some one else—' said the girl, timidly.

'Did she so? Ah, well! that romance is scarce more hopeful than the one which filial piety spins around the grizzled head of rough Sir Hugh. Walter Bridgenorth is as other men are, little sister; there is small share of the hero or the saint in his composition, I assure you.—But imagination is a strong force; it may prevail to adorn him still, even when the silver streak no longer severs him from his betrothed. I would not trust to that, however, in his case.—Must we part, then, Beatrice? You will walk this way again, and sing that quaint and pretty strain with which you greeted me—how goes it?—

> "Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
> With night we banish sorrow;
> Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft
> To give my Love good-morrow!"

Truly, a song of hope and cheer! And you have a wondrous sweet little voice; Robin red-breast him-

self could not chirp more blithely from his furrow. Farewell for the present, since prudence compels us to short and guarded meetings.'

He stooped to embrace her; and Beatrice, while his arms still encircled her, whispered, 'Had we not better wait to meet again, until we can meet openly? Sure, for you 'tis but courting danger; and for me——'

She broke off, gazing round with startled eyes.

''Tis nought,' he said, 'silly one!—only a squirrel in the branches of yonder oak. You have a fine steady nerve, Mistress Beatrice, upon my honour!'

'Ah, 'tis the deceit!' panted poor Beatrice. ''Tis the reserve I must practise which makes a coward of me. For once—for one meeting—I would risk all; but, Charlie, do not come from Goodrest here again. You say yourself 'tis not prudent—Mr. Sandiland dissuades you; oh, be ruled!'

'Mr. Sandiland may freely say what he pleases; with all deference, I intend to make use of my own discretion,' the young man said, haughtily. ''Tis not the first time that I have had to govern my actions without reference to Roger Sandiland, Beatrice. When I arrange a meeting, you may trust my prudence. Weighty matters hang upon my circumspection; I run no idle risks, whatever Mr. Sandiland

may be pleased to imagine. I will compromise neither you nor myself; I have emissaries who can let me know when the coast is clear. But you must have a colder heart than I looked for, if you can speak with indifference of losing the chances of deepening our mutual affection and confidence, which this waiting time presents. When once the storm begins, I shall have brief leisure for my nearest and dearest; when it is over, my head may either adorn the city gates of Newcastle, or toil in the service of a newly-constituted government. Either way, Beatrice, I do not think that you and I will have much time or opportunity for companionship. But, maybe'—and he shot a swift glance at her from the blue-gray eyes, in which an angry gleam appeared—'maybe the Whig uncle and aunt and cousins have taught you to mistrust a Jacobite brother. Maybe your affection for them outweighs any lingering love and duty towards me. They come first, without doubt. You have been happy here, sheltered from all risk and loss; while I have laboured to promote the Cause for which our father died. I own I feared to find your heart estranged: I could easily suppose——'

Beatrice roused herself, and spoke firmly.

'You are quite mistaken,' she said. 'My heart is

not estranged from you, Charlie. Would you love me better if I were thankless and cold to those who have been good to me when I had no other help?—if I could meet you secretly in this way without a scruple or a regret? But I will walk through the woods again, passing by the Forester's Ash. Only, I pray you, be prudent! be prudent, dear Charlie. If you and I were seen together——'

A crimson flush mounted to her forehead, and her lips quivered in entreaty. The thought of Raymond Forrest was very present with her; but a certain shyness had prevented any mention of her engagement to this newly-found brother.

'I will tell him of my promise to Raymond next time,' she thought.

Charles Cope laughed gently, but rather mockingly, as the meaning of her distress dawned upon him.

'"A gallant in the wood"?' he said. 'Is that the phantom-dread which scares you, little Beatrice? By my faith, no very alarming hypothesis! Is there no gay young gentleman of these parts who might chance to cross your path in woodland rambles, and for whom I might pass, should spying eyes of my uncle's keepers light upon us? But I will wrap me in a scarlet cloak when next we meet; this dull garb

is too sober for one's courting days. Farewell, little heath-blossom of rural wastes; do not forget the signal—"Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day!"'

He turned aside into the thicket, still humming snatches of the song which had caught his fancy.

CHAPTER XVII.

BEATRICE COPE once more met her brother by the Forester's Ash; but, ere she did so, Mr. Sandiland had given him information concerning her prospects which would have come best from her own lips. Roger Sandiland made this communication in ignorance, assuming that Beatrice, during their first conversation, must have told her brother of her position with regard to Sir Raymond Forrest of Drumscour.

Beatrice, however, had not spoken on the subject; and she now found herself forestalled in a way she little liked.

She noticed a difference in Charles's manner, even in their greetings—a restraint and coldness which had not been apparent before; and, when he began to question her, a hurt tone of offence was manifest, although he spoke very courteously.

'Beatrice,' he said, as they sat side by side beneath the gloomy ash-tree, 'what is this that Roger Sandiland tells me? He says that you are formally

betrothed to young Forrest of Drumscour. Truly my venerated uncle takes much upon himself, in these days of misrule! But,' he added, checking himself with the somewhat sarcastic smile which Beatrice had noticed once or twice before, 'I forgot that I am a dead man; and dead men have no rights. Nevertheless, Beatrice, since to you I live, I must pray you to tell me, has there been undue pressure on the part of the Hunter family, with regard to this proposed marriage? Your heart, I imagine, can scarce be engaged.'

'There has been no pressure,' Beatrice said; and she spoke resolutely, though her fingers toyed nervously with the ribbons that garnished the shady hat which she had taken off and laid upon her lap. 'I have made my free choice. And I hope to be a happy woman. He is a good, true gentleman; and what are politics, that they should part him and me?'

'You know not of what you speak,' her brother said, impatiently. 'You have seen naught of the world, and can scarce imagine the fair chances which the future holds for you. There is no date fixed for this preposterous marriage, I presume?'

'Yes,' replied Beatrice, distressed but firm. 'When the Christmas season is over—at the coming in of the year—we hope—we intend——'

'The matter need not be discussed between us on

the instant,' he answered briefly, waving her words aside. 'A few weeks hence we may approach this question from a different standpoint. Sweet mouse,' he said, changing his tone to one of tenderness at which his sister's heart thrilled, 'you little know what castles in the air I have built for you! And now you must pardon some seeming impatience, for to find you already pledged to a country bumpkin of these parts is enough to fret a calmer spirit than mine. You are very young, however; and this is my uncle's doing. Such bonds are easily broken—could I but show myself!'

Beatrice turned her large eyes upon him, with endless supplication in their depths.

'I do not wish to be free,' she said.

Charles Cope laughed to himself: the very spirit of gentle and polite banter danced around his lips.

'That was well done!' he exclaimed. 'You would make a charming actress, Beatrice, did you but play the *rôle* of the faithful heroine upon the boards. That speech, and that look, would bring down the house. Unfortunately, the sublime and the ridiculous are ever close together, and I have met this swain of yours, as it chances; I know somewhat of your north-country paragon, wherefore the situation is robbed of its romance. 'Twas in London that the privilege of his acquaintance was vouchsafed

me, when I passed among men as Lester Blundell, a gay young spark about town, without a care in the world save to extract the most amusement and the least profit from the twenty-four hours of each day and night. Well, your friend Sir Raymond was plain Mr. Forrest then, and a sufficiently ill-polished specimen of the country gentry. He brought his country manners to town; and took upon him to disapprove the ways of his elders and betters. They could afford to disregard his insolence; I, as a young man of his own standing, crossed swords with him once. . . . 'Twas some trifle upon which we quarrelled; I do not well remember what. . . . I have had many such affairs; and the details of this one have escaped me, saving that my opponent had power to put me into a towering passion.—Do not look pale upon it, silly child; there was slight effusion of blood. He is naught as a swordsman; but he pinked my arm, being the cooler of the two; there was no other reason for his success. My sword-arm, too; 'twas mightily inconvenient to wear it in a sling for three long weeks, all through "fighting wild," as we say, and neglecting science. Had my head been cool, Mr. Forrest might have learnt a salutary lesson; but 'twas flustered with rage and wine, and thus he won his advantage. . . . It skills not talking of a foolish business. . . . I little

dreamed that his insolence might one day push me harder still.'

He became silent; and Beatrice saw that he was retracing the whole course of this unlucky quarrel; the irritation—the affront—the challenge; the meeting in some quiet spot—the attempted mediation of friends—the trivial unsatisfactory wound which ended the affair in a somewhat humiliating manner. His brow grew dark, as he pondered; and his sister's cheek grew pale. There was little speech between them, of a pleasant nature, that afternoon.

Beatrice Cope was the more anxious to meet her brother again, on account of this jarring note of discord which had been struck between them. Her mind being much absorbed in the desire to reconcile him to the thought of her approaching marriage, she used less caution in resorting a third time to the Forester's Ash. On previous occasions she had looked and listened carefully as she drew near the spot; now she began to sing at once, scarcely glancing to the right hand or to the left. Her voice was pitched very low; but this, perhaps, did not render the sound less significant. Clearly, she sang with a purpose just then; though any chance passer-by might be puzzled to discover what the purpose could be.

For the first time no answering response was made

to the gay ditty; the silence of the woods at noonday remained unbroken. Then Beatrice started, and looked around her with sudden recollection. Surely the bushes behind her were stirred as by a hasty movement, the very moment she turned her head? She had some presence of mind; and, instead of becoming instantly silent, she sang little snatches of other songs, as she strolled on beyond the Forester's Ash. A stray auditor, did any such linger near, might well think now that this gay intermittent warbling proceeded from pure lightsomeness of heart. Many a girl will sing thus, up and down the house and about the garden-ground, through a long summer day.

Beatrice considered whether to return by the Forester's Ash, or to resign her purpose for that afternoon. By degrees the idea that Charlie might not have been at their trysting-place gained upon her mind; and she began to think that the hasty plunge of some startled animal into the bushes had probably occasioned her panic.

She had seen nothing, save the quivering and swaying of light twigs. Her action in turning to look behind her might well have scared some timid hare or rabbit, and caused it to leap into covert ere a human eye rested upon it.

Charlie had said he would be at the Forester's

Ash that afternoon; yet nothing was more likely than that some accidental hindrance might have delayed him by the way. Beatrice herself had had much difficulty in evading Bessie's companionship; and the very difficulty she had had in leaving Crowe Hall unobserved made her the more unwilling to forfeit the meeting she sought.

After a few minutes' consideration, Beatrice made her way once more to the Forester's Ash.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHE had walked slowly, and loitered; nearly an hour, she calculated, must have elapsed since she passed the spot before. An interval long enough for prudence, she thought; yet not so long that her brother, supposing him to arrive a few minutes after her unsuccessful attempt to attract his attention, should have given her up for that day, and set out on his return to Goodrest.

Beatrice's heart fluttered as she drew near the trysting-place; and the deep hush and loneliness of the spot oppressed her spirit. The idea that she had been followed returned upon her; she wished that she had taken a different path, and refrained from repassing the Forester's Ash. Her eyes explored each side of the path with painful apprehension; she dreaded to see—yet not to see was worse by far. She must know whether prying eyes lay in wait for her, ere beginning to sing the air which should summon Charlie from his concealment.

As she advanced she caught a glimpse of a man's russet cloak moving swiftly from point to point through the underwood; and for one terrible instant her heart stood still. Then, quick as thought, she recognized her brother. She drew a deep breath of relief, and the nameless tremor of her nerves passed away.

Charlie emerged from the path very cautiously.

'Hist!' he said, holding aside the briary tangle, and raising his finger in a warning attitude. He too looked and listened, as Beatrice had done; then he beckoned his sister into the tangled track which he made clear for her.

'I have a snug little nook in here,' he said. 'We must desert the Forester's Ash; for the place has been haunted all afternoon by a woman gathering sticks. An officious, meddlesome old crone, in good sooth! with the whole woodland before her, she must need intrude upon our privacy by dallying here. 'Twas on her account I could not answer you when you passed this way before; I knew not what her presence might portend.'

'Is she gone?' asked Beatrice, trembling.

'Nay, that I know not; she is out of sight, at all rates. 'Tis lucky that I donned this sober garb to-day; even her parcel-blind eyes might have caught the glint of a scarlet cloak. I was somewhat uneasy

lest you should return too soon; sooth to say, I liked not her manner of lingering in a locality generally avoided. Is not this a bower befitting Titania herself, Beatrice?'

Truly it was a lovely spot, such as may now and then be found set like a gem in the heart of the woods. Soft green moss lay spread as a close carpet in the little dell; creeping ivy, of the small pointed kind in which the tracery of white veins is beautifully manifest, covered the banks, binding the moss together with firm yet delicate tendrils; wild honeysuckle perfumed the air, and aspiring traveller's-joy flung its heavy garlands still higher among the hazel-bushes and larch-trees, forming a profuse environment of sweet-scented tufts and bright leaves. And a briar-rose, flowering late in the shade, cast a canopy of buds and blossoms over a hillock of moss which offered an attractive seat large enough to accommodate the brother and sister.

'Our own white rose,' said young Cope, reaching up absently to pull down a spray on which a half-blown rose, very white and silvery, was set off by many buds just bursting their green sheaths.

While he and his sister talked, he trimmed away the thorns, and made a posy of rosebuds for her to wear, doing this with slight apparent heed, as he had slashed the bark of the old ash-tree a few days

ago. Yet he gave her the flowers at last with some seriousness of intention.

'Our badge,' he said. 'The white rose and the white cockade. Ah, Beatrice, these emblems should mean to you as much or more than they mean to me. I am my father's representative; but you were his darling—his pet and plaything in many a weary hour. 'Tis passing strange to me—a thing I find scarce credible—that you should choose to marry away from us; that you should disown the traditionary principles of our house.'

Beatrice laid her fingers upon the stem, once so thorny, now so smoothly trimmed by her brother's knife.

'Will not the white rose one day shed her thorns?' she said, with a pleading smile more wistful than tears. 'Will not all Englishmen be united again, Charlie? Sure, this unhappy feud of Jacobite and Hanoverian cannot for ever divide the land. There will come a time when men can meet in amity, be their political creed what it may; when a Jacobite's daughter may wed with one who has borne arms for the present Government. Leave me that hope, at least. Remember that our father sent me, a little child knowing naught of these matters, ready to meet love with love, to Crowe Hall long ago. Remember that during all these years, affection and

kindness have been my portion; that my cousins are to me as brothers and sisters; that when Raymond Forrest courted me first, I knew no barrier betwixt him and me. And now he has my promise; a promise I can never take back. Consider——'

She broke off, in much agitation; and her brother, little used perhaps to encounter such real and simple feeling, made no hasty answer. He remained silent for a moment or two.

Then he said, with a resumption of his careless tone,

'The old wives say that marriages are made in heaven; and truly I think you must have been trained in that faith, Beatrice. You little know how lightly promises which seem to you so weighty and binding are esteemed in the world; you little know— But, after all, 'tis scarce worth while to enlighten you. I am not certain that the latest information on these points conduces greatly to the perfecting of the sweet and womanly graces. Be as true as you will, sweetheart; but let it be to a lover whose sword will be drawn on the right side, and whom I can meet on terms of brotherhood. And now, Beatrice, we must make our adieux. The shadows lengthen; and yon intrusive stick-gatherer, concerning whom I cannot profess myself perfectly at ease, has curtailed our intercourse cruelly. Has our

worthy uncle any sinister suspicions, think you? Is he likely to set a watch upon your comings and goings?'

Beatrice could only shake her head in silent distress.

'Well, we must walk warily, henceforth. I think you must not come hither again, unless I send you word that the coast is clear, and I would speak with you.—Do you know little Bill Lampeter, Beatrice? 'Tis a very imp of mischief, but sharp as a needle, and of proved fidelity. Bill comes about Crowe Hall, as he comes about all places where there is food to be found or mischief to be done. I will even intrust him with my messages. Softly! Wait one moment, while I see that all is right.'

The woodland path seemed silent and deserted, as Charles Cope looked out from his hiding-place. Only the low chirrup of birds greeted his ear; the broad sunbeams which fell between the trees and lit up many a shadowy dell with the full golden light of evening, revealed no glimpse of the bent figure of that persistent gatherer of sticks. Doubtless she had filled her apron long ago, slow and feeble though she appeared to be, and was even now kindling her evening blaze upon some chilly cottage hearth.

The young man made his way back to Goodrest

cheerfully, fearing no espionage. But Beatrice, as she sped along the path which led to Crowe Hall, began to imagine a disquieting echo to her own light steps. A narrow path, just wide enough to be trodden by one person, ran parallel to the broader walk—just a little keeper's track, winding in and out between beech-trees, and fenced from sight by the thick strong growth of evergreens. This track was always covered with fallen beech-nuts and dry leaves, which lingered from season to season; and Beatrice thought that a quick pattering step kept time to her own like a refrain.

There is something in the sound of steps out of sight which agitates the mind with a sense of mystery; even when there is no cause for fear; and Beatrice, alas! had cause sufficient to arouse painful apprehension. Her strained ears certified her that the step was either that of a woman or a child.

She hurried on; and the accompanying footfall grew quicker, with now and then a little tap, as though a stick helped the pedestrian to maintain this rapid rate of progress. She walked very slowly, and even stopped altogether; and then the rustling and crackling of the dry beech-mast and leaves became very faint and soon sank into silence. Whoever trod the hidden path, certainly waited upon the young girl's footsteps.

Beatrice walked on steadily after ascertaining this. She preserved her composure; but the relief with which she saw the wider opening of the path upon the lawn can be more easily imagined than described. The evergreens grew sparser, and were broken into clumps; and Beatrice, who had not dared to try to penetrate the thick screen, turned her head swiftly as she passed the first slight break in their serried ranks. She saw a pair of eyes, beneath a dark-brown hood; a pair of eyes, porcelain-blue in colour, and singularly frigid in their fixed and almost fierce regard.

Beatrice thought she knew the eyes, as she quivered beneath their icy gaze. Yet where and when, under what altered surroundings, had she seen them before?—She could not tell; and the lower part of the face, as well as the forehead, was hidden from sight.

Beatrice Cope flew across the wide velvety lawns like a lapwing; and did not see the substantial figure of her cousin Tom until she had well-nigh run against him in the shadow of the portico.

'Why, Beatrice, whither away in such haste?' he asked, good-humouredly. 'You run like a hunted creature, and look pale and distraught as a wandering ghost. Have you seen the Good People in the wood? Where is your constant shadow, little Bess?'

'Oh, I don't know, Tom—let me go; don't keep me. I am late already,' panted Beatrice.

'Well, well! and have we none of us been late before?' said good-natured Tom. 'The skies will not fall on that account, I dare say. Is it a lecture from Granny that you fear? or have Frank and Prue brought word from Drumscour that Dame Alicia Forrest loves not unpunctual folk? Eh, Beatrice? Ah, now indeed is the true explanation reached!'

'Oh, do not laugh at me!' poor Beatrice cried, with the sudden petulance of fatigue, fright, and distress; and she wrenched her slim hand from Tom's large loose clasp, and hurried within doors, leaving her cousin somewhat perplexed in mind.

'This marrying is but a poor business after all,' Tom Hunter reflected. 'Here is little Beatrice, once the blithest of our girls, an altered creature already. She will mope for hours. I have seen her dull as a caged blackbird, myself; and then, if one does but speak a word amiss, she will ruffle her features, and peck to right and left like an enraged wood-pigeon. Why, now, should she quarrel with me, because I suggest that Dame Alicia Forrest has a punctual soul?—An that were the worst we knew of my much-esteemed aunt at Drumscour, Beatrice might hold herself fortunate. But this, I dare to say, is

the very crook of the whole matter; poor Bee would fain be approved in a quarter wherein there is no approval for her.—Well, I care not how long we are spared another marriage-contract here. There is something mightily disturbing in the whole affair, to my thinking.'

And honest Tom went yawning in to the solid and abundant meal which closed the day at Crowe Hall.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE owner of the frigid eyes, before which Beatrice Cope had shrunk, stepped cautiously from the shelter of the woodland into the gathering shadows beyond. She soon reached a keeper's lodge in the park; and, lifting the latch without ceremony, went in, unfastening the loose cloak she wore, and setting down her basket, with the few sticks she had gathered, upon the stone floor. She stooped no longer now; her step was firm, though not rapid; her carriage was erect; and her eyes blazed with suppressed excitement and fiery feeling. This was no peasant-woman, with mind engaged in the gathering of sticks, but a haughty lady, whose will had been crossed, and whose pride was insulted even by a discovery which gratified her.

The keeper's mother, a humble quiet old woman, came forward to take the cloak and basket, which were her own property.

'Your ladyship will want these things no more?' she said.

'How know you that?' returned Dame Alicia Forrest, sternly.

'I saw Mistress Beatrice Cope flit across the lawns but now, my lady. And I said to myself, "She has met the gallant young gentleman in the wood."'

Dame Alicia did not speak immediately. She would have no confidences with Phœbe Hutton; but Phœbe's eyes were watching her, and Phœbe's mind knew all. Phœbe, however, was not prepared to find a curious element of distress in the proud dame's certainty. The keeper's mother had imagined that the breaking-off of a distasteful marriage would bring pure joy to Dame Alicia Forrest.

'For I would be glad enough to see our Dickon quit of a bride I misliked, choose how the matter went off,' thought Phœbe, to herself. 'A man soon consoles himself for a lost love; but an ill-assorted marriage is a sore evil which knows no cure. Sir Raymond will go away to the foreign wars for awhile, or to London-town maybe, and forget Madame Beatrice in the twinkling of an eye.'

Thus Phœbe Hutton meditated, while Dame Alicia pondered silently. Presently the lady asked:

'How many of these fair meetings have taken place, think you?'

Phœbe prepared herself for a lengthy tale.

'Our Dickon, madam, hath seen the young gentleman a many times and oft,' she said. 'He comes and goes from Goodrest, Dickon believes; and he has no mind to be seen, neither: but there! 'tis no use a-trying to throw Dickon off a warm scent, and him bred to the keepering from a boy. Dickon soon saw there was a weasel afoot; else why should the young gentleman lie whole days in the wood nigh the Forester's Ash? And then Mistress Beatrice began to come that way, alone, without Mistress Bessie at her side. And your ladyship knows 'tis rare to see the one without t'other. So Dickon he thought at first 'twas to meet Sir Raymond that Madam Beatrice walked alone; and to be sure that were no business of Dickon's; so he took no heed of it. Dickon, he hears no news; a might a'most as well be blind and deaf, for he cares for naught but the woods and they woodland creatures. But still one day he chances to hear tell as Sir Raymond was away to Berwick, and had been gone this great while past; and then he says to me, "Mother," says he, "there be some'at amiss yonder at the Great House." "Why, what be wrong there, lad?" says I. "I dunnot rightly know, yet," says Dick, very slow and quiet like. "But I means to find out, this day as ever is." And when he comed in to supper at the dusk-hour, he were not his ordinar', by no means;

and I saw he were put about terrible. And by and by he shuts-to the door and the window. "Mother," says he, "'tis the stranger gentleman as Madam Beatrice walks in the woods to meet. I saw them part but now," says he; "and there can't be no good out o' that. For she's promised to Sir Raymond Forrest, as all the country-side do know. What have she to do with meeting a stranger from Goodrest?" says Dickon, all flustered like. And then he were for making known to Squire that as he had seen. But I says, "No, Dickon; fair and softly goes far in a day. The Squire 'ull be sore angered," says I, "and he's known for a hasty man. Do 'ee think he'll abide the sight of 'ee long, after telling of him bad tidings? Howsoe'er the matter goes, there be one thing sure and certain; thee'lt lose thy lodge and thy woodland walk, as sure as thy name be Dick Hutton. Now I be going up to Drumscour," I says, "with the laced pinners I have been clear-starching for Dame Alicia; and I will get speech of her ladyship quietly, and speak to her as one woman to another, making no noise and no harm. 'Twill be better for thee than that the Squire's beard should be in a blaze, as we say in these parts. And Dame Alicia, she 'ull do that as is right and befitting," says I. And so Dickon after awhile——'

'I asked how long this acquaintance you wot of

has gone forward, Phœbe Hutton?' said the lady, breaking in upon the recital of Dick's scruples and perplexities.

She had given slight attention to Phœbe's words: her mind was occupied in piecing together the details of the afternoon, and in forecasting things yet to come.

The keeper's mother could give no very clear answer to this repeated question. Only, since a story always grows in the repetition, the result of her confused cogitations was naturally somewhat in excess of the truth.

Dame Alicia left the keeper's lodge believing that Beatrice Cope's meetings with the mysterious stranger had begun months ago.

She sat late that evening, writing to her son; the flame of her taper twinkled until the great clock in the hall of Drumscour had tolled one. Yet after all the letter was not sent. Dame Alicia tore it into small pieces in the morning and despatched an express to Berwick with a verbal message requesting Sir Raymond to come to her without delay.

Sir Raymond came, in hot haste, with little time at his disposal in which to ascertain whether his house was on fire, his plate-chest pillaged, or his mother on her death-bed. For warrants were out to arrest Mr. Forster and Lord Derwentwater, members

of Parliament for the county; and all was bustle and excitement among the military, who had sundry sealed orders to put in execution at this not unforeseen crisis. Therefore a brief ten minutes were all which remained to Raymond Forrest at Drumscour—a brief ten minutes, in which the healthy, ruddy tint of youth paled upon his bronzed cheek, the careless smile of youth died away from his lip. He looked ten years older when his mother's tale was spoken; and Dame Alicia, proud though she was, quailed a little before the dumb sternness of this man whom she had held in her arms a tiny helpless baby scarce eight-and-twenty years ago. He shielded his brow with his hand, as one who strives to steady dizzy thoughts and whirling fancies. Then he looked up; and his voice was hoarse and changed.

'Mother!' he said, 'was there none else who could play the spy for you?—You never loved her. . . . I would my sisters were home!'

'You say truly,' said Dame Alicia, coldly. 'I never loved her; but why? Can a mother's instinct err, Raymond? I trow not. If I loved not your Beatrice 'twas because I saw in her that which you could not perceive. And if I played the spy'—a crimson wave of colour passed over the lady's faded cheek and brow—''twas because I deemed your

honour safer in my hands than in those of any mean person of low estate. I had no mind that your matters should be spoken of among grooms and gamekeepers. The silence of the Huttons, mother and son, is secured. Dickon is a silent, faithful fellow, scarce more given to babbling than his deer-hound Oscar. And Phœbe loves golden guineas, and can discern her own interest and his. She knows their lodge would soon be empty, did she allow her tongue to wag of Mistress Beatrice and the handsome young man from Goodrest. Proof was necessary; and proof I have secured. But I have done nought to injure her for whom you have so deep a tenderness.'

There was a world of scorn in the last words; but Raymond's mind was fixed upon those which went before.

'From Goodrest!' he repeated; and then a thought of comfort flashed into his mind; his brow cleared; and he drew a long breath of relief.

'Mother,' he said, 'pardon me if I have spoken unbeseemingly. For the moment I was maddened; but I see light now. This is a sad business, yet not such as you imagine. This man is from Goodrest, say you? That explains all. Some friend in days gone by—some black shadow reaching out of a mournful past. My poor little bird! had I been at

hand she would have told me all: I could have shielded and helped her. Who knows how her tender heart may have been worked upon? Who knows——'

'This man could have been but a stripling when her father's death-knell was tolled,' said Dame Alicia, in low metallic tones. 'And 'tis scarce necessary to part from her father's friend with an embrace, methinks; that were an overstraining of dutiful courtesy, sure? Unless, indeed, new fashions have come in from France, Raymond.'

The young man started, stung to the very quick; then controlled himself, and said firmly,

'What like was he—this man of whom you speak?'

'He was, as I should guess, about your own age, but somewhat taller and considerably slighter in build. He wore a fair peruke, tied with a dark riband; and his dress, though plain, was exquisitely well appointed. His eyes were blue, and very swift and observant in their glances.—I am but a poor limner, Raymond; I can give you no graphic sketch. But, as I marked this young gentleman, I could not fail to think upon a very finished description of a certain Person beyond the seas, which Ermine, who is ever overmuch beguiled by thoughts of that ill-fated dynasty, procured from a lady who had been in

attendance on Mary Beatrice. If I had not known that Person to be beyond the seas——'

'Pardon, madam. Of whom do you speak?'

'I speak of the Pretender,' said Dame Alicia, her tone sinking into a clear whisper.

Sir Raymond Forrest remained silent while one might tell five or six beats of a man's strong even pulse. His hands lay clasped together upon the table before him; his eyes, with the restless instinct of supreme misery, swept the retired bowling-green upon which his mother's sitting-room looked out, from end to end. They ached with the strain of this fixed yet idle regard, and were bloodshot with the sudden fever of brain and nerve, when he turned them upon his mother once more.

'The Pretender is reported to be in England,' he said, in a whisper lower than her own. 'We have orders to search Goodrest, and arrest Templar.'

CHAPTER XX.

WHILE Sir Raymond Forrest and his mother sat together that morning, and the whole country-side was in a ferment of suppressed excitement, as tidings came in from Scotland creating terror in one household and joy in another, a messenger was sent from Whiteoaks to Crowe Hall.

Madam Pettigrew was much agitated by the news of the rising; much fluttered and disturbed also, for she, like many other Northumbrian women, scarce knew on which side her hopes really lay. She thought of her dead brother, who had clung to the Stuart line; of her good neighbours at Crowe Hall, who held by the Hanoverian settlement; of my Lord Derwentwater, with whom she had walked a minuet in her youth, and who was now like enough to lose his head on a charge of high treason.

Mistress Delia was a person of weak health and excitable spirits; and all this perturbation joined to some over-fatigue in quest of news, and many sleep-

less nights of alarm lest the Earl of Mar's army, or King George's dragoons, should descend upon her little lonely homestead, had thrown her into a nervous fever. She had a great fancy for the society of Mistress Beatrice Cope, under these circumstances; not that Beatrice could be reckoned a very effective addition to the garrison of Whiteoaks. But Beatrice had produced a pleasing impression during her visit to Mistress Delia, who no longer preferred Prue or Bessie.

Mistress Delia thought that Beatrice's light step and soft voice would be welcome under present circumstances. Beatrice would tell her all that was said at Crowe Hall, at this time of crisis; and the long anxious days would pass less slowly and wearily with the aid of the gentle young guest.

So an imploring summons was sent to Crowe Hall, beseeching Mistress Beatrice to mount the steady sorrel without delay, and ride through the deep lanes once more behind old Thomas, who 'could not abide the worrit of young folk continual-like, not if 'twere ever so.'

Mistress Delia differed from Thomas in earnestly desiring the company and protection of young folk just now; and she would have rejoiced could one of the lads from the Hall have been induced to take the old servant's place as escort, with a prospect of

remaining a few days at Whiteoaks. Such a defender would have been welcome, although he wore clumping boots, slammed doors, and whistled morning, noon, and night.

But the young Hunters were full of bustle and animation, and had no wish to sequestrate themselves from sight and sound of martial enterprise, in the dim seclusion of Whiteoaks. They laughed at Madam Pettigrew's fears for her household, which were indeed sufficiently groundless, since neither party was like to waste time in molesting a person so inoffensive.

The mistress of Whiteoaks had neither great wealth nor obtrusive politics to render her obnoxious to spoil or insult. She might be requested to furnish a meal for King George's troops; or, in the event of a descent from Scotland, Mar's Highland auxiliaries might use scant ceremony in making free with her poultry, her pigeons, and her sheep. But these depredations would be committed in passing; Whiteoaks had no serious danger to fear from either force.

So, at least, did Squire Hunter and his sons aver, when Granny seemed loth that Beatrice should go to lonely Whiteoaks. Delia Pettigrew had far better come to Crowe Hall, if she were timorous of molestation, than take away one of the lasses to share her peril, be it great or be it small, said Granny with

her usual sound sense; and 'young madam' echoed Granny's opinion earnestly.

But Mistress Delia's ambassador represented that she was unfit for the ride to Crowe Hall; and, moreover, what was to become of her household in her absence? 'When the cat's away, the mice will play,' was an adage frequently on Mistress Delia's lips, and upon which she acted very consistently. Her ruddy-cheeked Joan, Patty, and Eliza had few opportunities for idleness and divertisement. Mistress Delia's eye was seldom off them; and Mistress Delia, though quaking sorely, would not desert her post now, in her house of Whiteoaks.

She did not wish to disband her household servants, and leave her family treasures a prey to the spoiler. Yet she much desired company and support; and she put great faith in a certain herb-tea for which Crowe Hall was famous. Beatrice Cope, she knew, possessed the secret which gave special worth to this distillation. Every farmer's dame could brew herb-tea, after a fashion; but old Madam Hunter's draughts had a singular virtue, and were prized as a sovereign specific by those who could obtain them.

This complimentary recognition of Granny's medical skill went far to win 'young madam' to look favourably upon the request for Beatrice Cope's attendance. If Mistress Delia's recovery really depended upon

the due administration of the Crowe Hall remedies, she said, 'twas unkind to withhold the aid thus sought. And then the Squire, and Tom, and Wilfrid, and even Bob also, joining in after the manner of boys, laughed to scorn the idea of any peril which might threaten Whiteoaks in these September days.

Thus it came to pass that Granny, for once in her life, was overruled, Mistress Beatrice, for her part, having an eager desire to pack up her little parcels and be gone. For she felt a very strong wish to be away from Crowe Hall—to look upon different scenes —to await her fate elsewhere.

She could not tell what a day might bring forth; and ever, sleeping and waking, those cold observant eyes, seen for one brief moment as she threaded the outskirt of the wood, haunted her. All night the memory of them had disturbed her sleep; and during the morning nothing had banished them, until this message of entreaty from Madam Pettigrew broke the spell under which the girl lay. And perhaps the remembrance that the great bliss of her youth had come to her at Whiteoaks made the very name of the place sound like an omen of good in the ears of Mistress Beatrice Cope.

Her first thought was that if her brother required to see her again, a meeting could be more safely arranged anywhere else than in the grounds of

Crowe Hall. 'Twas a great matter that these dangerous visits of his to the vicinity of the Forester's Ash should receive an instant check.

Therefore Beatrice made up her packages with much alacrity, while Bessie Hunter helped and hindered, protesting against the filling of the little trunk, which was to be sent by the carrier's cart on Saturday, did Madam Pettigrew urge her young friend to prolong her stay.

'And that she is sure to do,' grumbled Bessie. 'Cousin Delia's nervous fever will scarce be cured come Christmas, I promise you, if your stay depends on its continuance!'

'Then, Bess, were I Cousin Delia, I should begin to desire a change of nurse and physician long ere Christmastide comes round,' said Beatrice. 'Help me to fold this quilted petticoat, ladybird; is not the satin of a lovely changeful hue, like to the shifting colours on a peacock's neck and breast?—Bessie, Bessie! have you a mind to punish me for wishing to nurse poor Mistress Delia, by spoiling my holiday garb? Who ever heard of folding a silken skirt in the middle of the front breadth, in the name of wonder? And here is my new paduasoy craves ceremonious handling.'

Beatrice was able to talk of the satin petticoat and dainty paduasoy; and even—so potent is

feminine instinct—to think of them too, while the full force of her mind was engrossed by considerations as to the method in which she could best send word to her brother of her change of residence. The supposed Mr. Vanburgh was of course the obvious means of communication; and Beatrice always shrank with nervous misgivings from private discourse with him. He would doubtless know of her sudden departure from Crowe Hall; but she dreaded lest he should fail to send speedy word to Charlie, and that rash young gentleman should again revert to the locality wherein they had been watched and spied upon the day before.

Recognizing the necessity of instant warning to Charlie, Beatrice endeavoured to see Mr. Vanburgh before she left; but opportunities do not always come when most earnestly desired, and her nerve failed a little, so that she could not attempt any daring step.

Anne and Prue and Bessie were hither and thither, lamenting her departure, and begging her not to stay long with Madam Pettigrew; the boys, too, had last words to say.

Beatrice felt like a person in a dream, and could only meet each exigency as it arose. She laughed and joked with the others, when they tried to scare her with whimsical representations of danger at

Whiteoaks, and asked whether she felt her courage high enough to be Madam Pettigrew's lieutenant. She laughed, too, when they threatened her with Raymond Forrest's displeasure; but a sore aching of the heart underlay that mirth.

'What will Raymond say when he comes here and finds the bird flown?' cried Prue; and the brothers rejoined that Raymond would be taken down a peg or two in his own estimation presently. Evidently he was not to have everything his own way just yet, they said; Mistress Beatrice meant to keep him humble and thankful.

In the midst of their witticisms, Beatrice rode away; and never a word had she the chance of speaking to Mr. Vanburgh. He had not appeared at all; and now, as the sorrel horse jogged slowly along, she began to blame herself for cowardice and indecision. If it so fell out that her departure was not known to the tutor until evening, her brother might run a whole day's risk in those woods which were not safe.

Beatrice shivered a little in the warm September sunshine, as she dwelt upon those words 'not safe.' An unknown danger is always most terrible; she wondered who could have spied upon her so resolutely yesterday? The owner of those eyes must surely be fierce and cruel, without pity. Then she

remembered a feature of the affair which had not previously struck her: the spy had left watching Charlie in order to follow her.

This thought came with a flash of relief to Beatrice Cope. She did not greatly fear ill-natured gossip; Raymond, she thought, would surely trust her, even though she could give him no clear explanation of any accusation which might be circulated secretly. At all events, in the fear for her brother's life, personal fears shrank and dwindled away into insignificance.

Beatrice did not chat with old Thomas this time, as upon a previous journey to Whiteoaks, but sat passive behind him, turning many thoughts in her head. As for Thomas, he desired no talking. He proceeded quietly on his way, now and then whisking off the flies from the sorrel's ears and encouraging the creature with curious, half-articulate sounds, according to the practice of carters and such folk.

As the horse plodded slowly on towards the brow of a long hill, Beatrice, who was looking in front with somewhat blank and anxious eyes, thinking always of Charlie and his perilous predicament, espied a small, elfish figure which stood dark for a moment against the bright sky-line, and then dropped suddenly out of sight, probably into shadow of the heavy tangle overhanging a wayside ditch.

Quick as thought she drew out her tablets, a present from Tom Hunter, made of ivory and mounted with silver. Beatrice had been very proud of Tom's birthday present, but she was about to trust it on an uncertain venture now. Behind Thomas' broad back she indited a few words upon the delicate surface. Then she detached the slight silver chain which secured the tablets at her waist, and waited.

The sorrel proceeded deliberately onwards; old Thomas surveyed the busy harvest fields just coming into view; and Beatrice with seeking eyes explored the ditch by which they passed. She leant a little from her seat; in her left hand, which hung loosely down, she held her tablets and a piece of shining money bright as they.

Presently she saw Bill Lampeter, the boy whom her brother had mentioned as a trustworthy go-between, squatting among the fern and bramble, and looking up roguishly at Master Thomas the groom, as though considering whether his dignified position in life must be held to exempt him from practical joking.

Bill was sorely tempted to throw up his arms and cry 'whir-r-r,' as the horse and rider went by. But Master Thomas' whip looked heavy, especially towards the butt-end; and Bill did not like to banish

himself from the grounds and out-buildings of Crowe Hall by any act of too daring aggression.

His attention wandered from Master Thomas, however, the instant he perceived that the beautiful young lady on the pillion was leaning towards him trying to catch his eye, and pressing her finger to her lip in sign of silence. Bill was all alertness, then. For one second he was close to Beatrice's hand; and the tablets and the money passed from her slim white fingers and embroidered glove of scented Spanish leather to Bill's hard little paw, brown with exposure and strong as steel. Then he was out of sight again; and Beatrice silently thanked Heaven for one of those favourable chances which are so welcome in straits and necessity. Now Charlie would be warned; now, did this boy but prove faithful, all might be well.

She turned her head by and by, for a last glance at Bill. He was just emerging from his hiding-place, an undersized urchin, twelve years old in reality, but looking scarce nine. His small features were twisted into a grin of mingled triumph and cunning; triumph prevailing as he looked at the money, and cunning gaining the ascendant as he considered what he must do in fulfilment of his side of the silent bargain.

Poor Beatrice, as she watched her messenger,

thought that she had intrusted her brother's security and her own credit and happiness to no very safe hands. But necessity knows no choice. She hoped that little Bill might prove alike discreet and faithful.

Bill Lampeter himself had no intention of betraying the trust reposed in him. On the contrary, he was proud of it, and anxious to acquit himself in a manner which might do honour to his sagacity. He thought the matter over, and weighed the difficulties of the position. Then, keeping under shadow of hedges, and creeping from field to field, he struck across country to Goodrest.

But Bill, as he went, heard sounds which he did not understand. He meant to cross the lane, which, winding in and out among the hills, formed the ordinary approach to Goodrest; and as he listened, with the habitual caution of a wild woodland thing ere emerging from shelter, the regular trot of many horses together struck upon his acute ear.

Bill had plenty of time to dash across the road, and get away out of sight in the fields beyond; but he did not do this. He wanted to know the history of this strange advent, and to see the military pageant sweep by.

They came on steadily, the hoofs of the heavy troop-horses making the ground vibrate: and Bill,

being only a boy, began to wish that he had made good his flight while flight were possible. He lay beneath the large dock and hemlock leaves, desperately frightened and scarcely daring to breathe. His bead-like eyes peered up at the leader of the troop, in whom he recognized Sir Raymond Forrest of Drumscour. About twenty men rode with Sir Raymond, all well-mounted, well-armed, and well-disciplined.

Bill wondered where they were going, and on what errand they were bound. Horses and men were weary and dusty, having come from Berwick that morning at a rapid pace in the blaze of a powerful sun; and Bill, seeing this, surmised that they would not pass the little inn in the valley, called 'The Silent Woman,' without some pause for refreshment. Thence they would doubtless proceed to Goodrest by the road, since bridle-paths would be inconvenient for so large a number, although Sir Raymond Forrest possessed over-much local knowledge.

Thus Bill reasoned, speedily concluding that the party were bound for Goodrest, and the intended harassment of some person or persons there.

Presently he remembered the tablets in his hand, and the whispered name the young lady had spoken. Bill could not read—the writing upon the ivory was

a dead letter to him; but his quick little wits at once jumped at the conclusion that he was to warn Mr. Cope of this very peril; and that, unless he made the better haste, he would be too late.

Trusting much to the probable pause before the door of 'The Silent Woman,' Bill darted away; running at the best speed which his wiry body and long breath could accomplish.

And Beatrice Cope, dismounting from the sorrel horse before Madam Pettigrew's door, little dreamt that Charlie's future fortunes depended upon the fleetness of little Bill, who was pressing up the last hill with a dry throat and a stitch in his side, as she sipped her chocolate and looked round the tranquil parlour in which Raymond Forrest first knelt at her feet. She thought of him, not of Charlie—yet Charlie's life hung in the balance, while his sister sat smiling with dreamy eyes.

CHAPTER XXI.

BILL LAMPETER was only just in time to save the gentlemen at Goodrest from a sudden and inconvenient check to all their machinations. He dared not waste a moment in searching for Mr. Cope; a word to the porter, Job Eccles, was all poor Bill had strength and leisure to speak, ere he fled back into the waste places he knew so well.

Thanks, however, to his warning, the dragoons found a very quiet household at Goodrest. There were few men about the place, and those there were were old, and for the most part deaf. Such hindrances as deafness and stupidity can interpose were indeed presented; and the young commander suspected that Goodrest, an hour ago, had worn a different aspect.

Mr. Templar, the butler said, was in foreign parts, and had not been heard of lately. Some uneasiness was felt on his account, the old man added, shaking

his white head. In the master's absence all went very quietly at Goodrest. But if Sir Raymond had orders to search the premises, doubtless he could go over the house from attic to cellar without contradiction.

Sir Raymond Forrest was under orders to search Goodrest with minute and thorough exactness. He conducted his examination of the rambling old house with all imaginable courtesy, however, disturbing the inmates as little as possible, and extending marked consideration towards the gentle ladies who were occupied as usual with their embroidery frames, their distillations, their music, and their prayers. Such arms as he found he seized; but these weapons were old and cumbrous, and of small value.

Sir Raymond rode away, meditative and much depressed at the ill-success of his expedition; sorely troubled, too, as to his own private affairs.

Soon after he got to quarters, a sealed note was brought him from one high in command, the contents whereof wrought an entire change in his frame of mind.

'Our information proves false,' wrote the general; 'the Person sought is at present north of the Tweed. Secure constant tidings of what goes on at Goodrest, and send scouts along the Border country each day.'

Then came a list of the points at which a descent from Scotland was thought probable, with strict injunctions as to the management of scouting-parties.

Raymond Forrest was much on the alert that evening, and earned the credit of a very smart and competent officer. His manner was more than commonly swift and decisive; his faculties seemed to be wholly given to the task intrusted to his command. He had ridden far that day; but no touch of weariness dulled his perceptions or cooled his energy. He laughed gaily to himself, as he tossed off an unusually deep draught of excellent Burgundy.

'Nothing like warming to one's work, is there, Forrest?' said one of his brother officers, at the mess-table. 'The smell of powder from t'other side the Border is a jolly elixir. Here's confusion to the Pope, the Pretender, and that sly old fox at Goodrest.'

Sir Raymond drank the toast with honours; but neither the smell of powder, nor the good wine, were responsible for the exhilaration of his spirits. The words 'Information false' kept sounding in his ears. And he said to himself again and again that where one mistake had been, another was possible; and reminded himself that his mother Dame Alicia had

never liked Beatrice Cope. Doubtless some chance resemblance had beguiled eyes very ready to be deceived; 'twas some other figure than that of his betrothed which flitted to and fro beneath the Forester's Ash.

At the first available opportunity Sir Raymond visited Crowe Hall, hoping to see his lady-love. But Beatrice was not there; and the trivial fact that he had not been informed of her departure for White-oaks aroused the moody spirit within the young man's heart once more. To send news from place to place was no easy matter at this juncture; and the party at the Hall were quite unconscious that Raymond could imagine himself possessed of any ground for offence.

They perceived that he was not in his ordinary spirits; but this they attributed to disappointment at not finding her whom he sought. And—very unfortunately, as it happened—Frank and Prue, the 'wags' of the family, amused themselves with sundry witticisms respecting Beatrice's willingness to reinforce Madam Pettigrew's garrison.

The little harmless jests with which their cousin went away were repeated to this man in whose brain and heart suspicion lurked; suspicion firmly forced down, yet vigilant and unresting, watching ever for

trifling indications by which to gauge the depths of the love he was beginning to question.

Raymond Forrest rode away from Crowe Hall in a temper of mind which boded ill for Mistress Beatrice Cope. And when he presented himself at Whiteoaks, his whole intention with regard to her had undergone a change. Had he found her at Crowe Hall, he would have spoken earnestly and openly of the mysterious tale he had been told, only reserving the name of his informant; but the idea that she had fled from him entirely altered his purpose. He would see, he thought, how she met him, and draw his own conclusions from look and tone.

And then he winced before a sudden remembrance of his mother's comments upon Beatrice Cope's changing colour and fragile appearance, soon after her engagement with him was announced.

'Mistress Beatrice bears her triumph meekly,' said scornful Dame Alicia, then. 'One would not say, to look at her, that her betrothal brings much joy.'

'Oh, madam, I pray you hush!' Ermine had cried.

Raymond remembered words and tone vividly, although he had been too happy to give much thought to his mother's haughty contempt or his sister's

deprecating appeal. Ermine's entreaty for silence recurred to him with more force than Dame Alicia's attack, now, in his doubt and despondency. A chill misgiving crossed his mind, and turned his face to stone.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIR RAYMOND FORREST found some difficulty in accomplishing a visit to Whiteoaks in these bustling times. However, he appeared there one day, somewhat weary with riding—far wearier with brooding over thoughts which did not please.

Beatrice Cope's first feeling was one of dismay, as she looked into his altered countenance, and received his grave and formal greeting. The times, she thought, must sure be very evil, if anxieties connected with the rising in Scotland could change Raymond thus.

Mistress Delia was present when the lovers met; and Mistress Delia, under all circumstances, was more than willing to assume the chief part in conversation. She had much to say to Sir Raymond on the disturbed state of the country; and Beatrice sat by, swift flames of colour coming and going in her cheeks, and a great dread taking possession of her fluttering heart.

She and Charlie had been watched, she knew, in the woods at Crowe Hall. . . . If this strange new Raymond, with the stern set countenance and low unvarying voice, should question her by and by, how much might she safely say?

Beatrice began to think that she must choose between her lover's truth and her brother's life; and when once she had realized this, the brave spirit which was hers by inheritance steadied her nerves. She was pale, but very calm, when Raymond replied to some remark of Mistress Delia's by saying, in a peculiarly icy tone,

'There are some persons, madam, whose good fortune provides them with friends on both sides; and to whom the triumph of neither contending faction can be an unmixed evil. This leads to some confusion occasionally—some perplexity—some treachery, perhaps;'—here he caught his breath, as one who controls all outward expression of almost unendurable pain—'but 'tis well, doubtless, on the whole. Come victory or defeat, these persons of whom I speak stand secure.'

'And indeed that is very true, Sir Raymond,' said Mistress Delia. 'Had my poor brother been spared to see this day, I might have been in the same case myself; for he ever stood well with the Jacobite gentry in these parts, and had a leaning towards the

banished King. 'Tis like enough to be forgotten now; but should the Earl of Mar's army pass this way, I must make shift to put forward poor Willie's good neighbourhood with Squire Templar of Goodrest.'

As these words greeted his ears, Sir Raymond turned his eye upon Beatrice; and her paleness vanished, eclipsed by a blush painful to see, and painful to endure.

'Raymond,' she said, with unusual decision of manner, 'have you a mind to survey the garden with me, if my kind cousin will excuse us awhile? The late cluster-roses are very fair upon the western trellis, are they not, Cousin Delia?'

She moved as she spoke, and seemed almost unconscious of the little hindrances which Madam Pettigrew interposed.

'Twas nigh upon the tea-hour, Mistress Delia said; and tea must not be allowed to stand. Sir Raymond had ridden many miles, and would doubtless prefer to rest himself in the quiet parlour. As for the cluster-roses, they were no such sight, although Beatrice admired them. And she, Mistress Delia, had much to say to Sir Raymond—many questions yet to ask concerning the probable advance of the Scottish army, and the best method of speaking wild Highlandmen fair.

But to these and similar sayings Mistress Beatrice paid scant attention, merely enduring the flow of words with patient eyes which looked beyond her cousin's face, and a somewhat pathetic little smile.

Mistress Delia did but speak from the habit of opposition, it being her instinct to see drawbacks to any suggestion not emanating from herself. She was not in the least offended when Sir Raymond reinforced the silent persistence which was all Beatrice felt equal to maintaining. He should much like to see the cluster-roses, he said, and to enjoy a whiff of the sweet fresh air in Whiteoaks garden. They would not be oblivious of time, however. In ten minutes, or even less, they would return to Madam Pettigrew's parlour, when he trusted to hear that her plans with regard to the Highland invaders had taken shape.

Then he bowed to the younger lady, and offered his hand to lead her to the garden, with a ceremonious politeness strained a little beyond the usual point; and the two stepped out upon the turf walk, Beatrice wearing a small hood drawn over the pretty hair which was piled high in many modish puffs.

At the bend of the path, where it wound behind apple-trees loaded with reddening fruit, and the window no longer commanded their conference, Mistress Beatrice Cope turned upon her lover. She

stood before him a slight but queenly creature, drawn up to her full height, and with that star-like innocency of eye and forehead which only true souls keep long in this world of ours.

'Sir,' she said, 'I perceive that a shadow has fallen between your mind and mine, turning you from your clear judgment of me. I feel persuaded that some one—I know not who—has aspersed my truth towards you.—And I tell you plainly, as true maid to true bachelor, that respecting this matter I can give no full explanation now.'

'Beatrice,' the young man replied, 'you have been my heart's one love. I never doubted—Heaven help me, I never doubted!—until four short days ago, that I was yours. But I have heard strange things of you—idle tales, maybe—I know not what. Suffice it to say that I will set you free; you need no longer practise a dissimulation unworthy of yourself and insulting to me, because a promise unwillingly given binds you in uneasy fetters. I ask no questions; I do but give back what was mine only in semblance. . . . 'Twas a somewhat cruel jest, as I think; I could marvel that you felt the inclination to play with me thus . . . but 'tis like you know not the pain such breach of faith inflicts. We were acquainted as children; was it so hard for you to speak the truth to me?—I might have brought for-

ward my suit again, had you professed yourself indifferent to me; but you need not have feared persecution from me, or over-zealous furthering of my cause on the part of my uncle. In my poor mind I think 'twas scarce necessary, this double-dealing of yours. But for the sake of the love I once bore you—for the sake of the love I believed in—let us part kindly, sparing reproaches.—I came here to-day to say this: mine errand is speedily done.'

'Raymond,' she said, with flashing eyes, 'what have you ever seen in me, that you should speak thus?—Heaven pardon you, if you can think this love of mine an empty simulation; a fleeting show, with naught real and stable in it. You may give me back my promise; but you cannot give me back my heart. In earnest verity I pledged you that; if we part now 'tis yours in separation, as it might have been yours in union, could you have trusted me.—You know my history, and the troubles of the times; can you not imagine that there may be secrets in my keeping of which I may not—dare not—speak to you?'

She looked full in his face with eyes true and steady as those of a little child; and the mist of doubt and jealousy cleared away from the mind of Sir Raymond Forrest. The tension of his lips

relaxed; his whole face softened into a natural expression once more. A quick thought flashed through his brain, as he clasped her hands in so firm a grasp that the strength of his fingers hurt her.

'Beatrice!' he said, 'pardon me one question, sweetest dearest heart!—Your only brother, as I have heard, died years ago in France?'

''Twas so reported,' she said.

Oh, the wide imploring gaze of those beautiful eyes! the trembling of that sensitive mouth over the secret half told!

'You will not betray him?' she breathed. 'You will not make me my brother's murderess?'

'Heaven forbid!' he answered, still holding her hands and looking into the eyes which did not flinch. 'And may Heaven be praised that my search was fruitless, yonder afternoon at Goodrest!—Beatrice, we may meet, he and I, as man to man, each one fighting in truth and honour upon a quarrel to which his faith stands pledged; but other wrong, I swear to you, I will do him none. If my sword meets his in fair and open fight, 'tis but the chance of war; even brothers are opposed as deadly enemies in these our civil broils.—But to have found him there at Goodrest, like a rat in a trap; to have been the means of his capture and arrest—Bah! we will not think or talk of that, since I found him not. And,

now, sweet one, can you forgive the doubt which tortured me and did you wrong?—You might, I think, could you but know the agony I have endured —did you but understand——'

Well, well!—It seemed that Mistress Beatrice's forgiveness was to be had for the asking, and that in liberal measure. She bestowed it ungrudgingly; and the lovers were exceedingly happy in their restored confidence—a confidence which Sir Raymond thought proper to carry a point beyond that which strict prudence warranted.

Perhaps he wished to show Beatrice how completely he trusted her; perhaps he did but act upon the ill-considered impulse of the moment. At all events, he told her that he had received orders to go forth with his troop at night on important service. Information had been brought in that a strong party of Jacobite gentlemen from Scotland, bearing with them money and papers of instruction, would cross the border that night near Drumscour, on their way to join the main body of the Stuart army now about to march into England. To prevent this junction was, of course, highly desirable; and Sir Raymond Forrest, who knew the Border-country well, and had proved himself alert and prompt in difficult service before, was chosen to conduct the night's enterprise.

Sir Raymond would have acted discreetly in

keeping silence concerning his errand; but he was an impetuous, outspoken young man, and thought no harm could come of thus mentioning the chance of distinction which had fallen in his way.

Beatrice grew paler and paler as she listened to the words which told her that the tide of war was drawing near; and her heart sank down with dread for Raymond and for those against whom he went forth; although she too, like himself, believed that this service would remove him from all probability of specially painful collision with her brother.

Since affairs were now drawing rapidly to a crisis, Charlie, doubtless, was on his way to the general rendezvous which these gentlemen were to reach by and by—nay, he might be already on the spot, busied in preparation. He surely would not be with the Scottish party; but a heavy foreboding of ill crept over Beatrice's spirit nevertheless. She spoke no word of this her great terror, knowing she ought not to make the matter grievous to Sir Raymond by words of hers; only she lingered at his side as they walked together, while poor Madam Pettigrew's tea was spoiling, and prayed in her heart that the distractions of the times might be healed.

Suddenly, as they turned their steps towards the house, Sir Raymond said:

'I do not over-well like your remaining in this

lonely place, love of mine. There is no peril, that I wot of; yet 'tis surely somewhat selfish in Madam Pettigrew to withdraw you from Crowe Hall and the cheerful folk there, at a time such as this. I marvel my uncle and aunt let you go.'

'Cousin Delia was ill, you know, and I came to act sick-nurse,' said Beatrice, smiling. 'And this reminds me that we are neglecting my patient shamefully, for the sake of our own private discourse. Come, sir, quicken your steps! I have seen when three, or at the most four, of your long paces would bring you across the width of this lawn. But none are so slow as those who have a mind to loiter,' she said, nodding her head with a pretty, imperious gesture, and waving her kerchief to impatient Mistress Delia at the window.

And after that, ten minutes or so passed swiftly and blithely in the parlour; and Mistress Delia little guessed that her young friend Beatrice had any cause for concern and anxiety. But when the farewells were over, Beatrice slipped away from her cousin, with that strange longing for one look more —one word more—which many have experienced in moments of parting.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHE threw a dark cloak about her, and ran through back-passages to the stable-yard, where Sir Raymond Forrest was about to mount his horse. His groom was searching for a forgotten whip or strap in the stable; and she had an instant in which to say, with all her heart in her eyes and her entreating voice,

'Raymond, have a care of yourself to-night!'

That was all; and she could not feel much comfort in his laughing reply:

'Sweetheart, do you want to make a coward of me at this time of day?'

Then he rode off cheerily; and she stood alone at the gate, looking down the solitary lane and across some desolate fields over which a chill white mist was creeping.

The beauty of the autumn day was at an end, and a wet night was coming on. But Beatrice Cope scarcely felt the damp wind which ruffled her hair

and blew the cold rain into her face. She stood there long, pondering many things, until a voice close to her interrupted her troubled thoughts. The low tones which addressed her were those of Mr. Sandiland.

'My child,' he said, regarding Beatrice with eyes which seemed to compel instant and full submission to his will, 'I have left Crowe Hall, never to return thither. I prepared the way for this step some weeks ago: your uncle does but know that the Dutch secretary, Mr. Vanburgh, has received a summons to Holland.—And now the time has come when you must choose your part. Heaven grant you strength to choose aright!—to cast away earth's dearest ties, if need be, not shrinking from the sacrifice! Bethink you—others have been so called, and have spared naught. Your father died for this quarrel, when such death came hardly. I, even I myself, have resigned all joy that life can offer, all security—even somewhat, it may be, of that honour dear to all who bear the style of gentlemen—if in any wise I might further this righteous Cause. I would have spared you the trial, if so it might have been; but the call comes to you to-day, and must be obeyed.—'Tis merely the speaking of three words: which way does Sir Raymond ride to-night?'

How mournfully the wind moaned across the open

fields!—how the branches of the trees creaked and groaned, as the gale tossed them violently to and fro, shaking down the half-ripe fruit of autumn! how heavily the rain came sweeping on in drenching gusts!

There was a pause of some moments between the two who spoke together, ere Beatrice found voice to say,

'May I know why you inquire concerning this?'

'Surely; I desire to conceal nought from you. You are possessed of the purport of his errand?'

She bowed her head.

''Tis needless, then, to enter upon that subject. Suffice it to say that if he meets with those loyal gentlemen whom he goes to seek there will be a struggle—loss of life, maybe—hindrance, without doubt. Did I but know the route he takes, I could avert this danger by means of preconcerted signals. The time, however, is very brief; the matter presses—information upon which I reckoned with assurance has failed me. I implore you, do not delay. Trust in my judgment, since there is scant leisure to form your own.'

Beatrice Cope's face became whiter, and she trembled very much.

'How can I do this thing?' she said. 'We are betrothed.'

A sudden spasm of pain—almost of indignation—passed over Roger Sandiland's countenance.

'Ah! 'tis as I feared; your heart is not with us. That which touches us keenly has no hold on you. A few idle scruples, prompted by affection for this young man, outweigh with you the safety of a noble Cause. Be it so: reproaches are unavailing now. 'Tis the fault of circumstances, in part. But I said to you that there may be loss of life to-night—and of whose life, think you?—Sir Raymond Forrest rides very forward in danger, does he not?—These gentlemen will be well armed, and desperate.'

She lifted up her head then; the trembling childish creature, with the soft changing face, had vanished away, lost in the sorrowful yet resolute woman who had inherited an honourable spirit. Her very voice was altered, as she said, almost proudly,

'I cannot do this which you desire. I cannot break faith.'

'There was no promise?' he answered, quickly.

'What need was there of any promise? We are betrothed, as you know; his secrets, if he has any, must be my secrets too. Listen, I pray you; indeed, I am not heartless; my inmost soul is torn in refusing what you ask of me; but sure the Cause you love—the Cause for which my father died, and my brother lives—is too noble for service such as this

would be. I cannot doubt that you, who mark all things, marked my coming engagement ere it was completed; yet you spoke no word of warning—did not even reveal yourself to me—until I had given my troth to Sir Raymond Forrest, and my future life was bound to his by a sure promise. That promise I cannot recall, neither can I make it a cloak for treachery to him. He speaks freely to me, never doubting that I shall respect his confidence; and I must respect it, come what may.'

'That suffices; I urge you no further,' said Roger Sandiland. 'It appears that you have deliberately chosen to forget your own people and your father's house.'

He spoke sternly, in deep offence and disappointment; but nevertheless the words he used came to Beatrice with an assurance of strength. She clasped her hands together suddenly as she answered,

'In this case—even my own people, and my father's house.'

The final words were bravely spoken; yet, when he left her, she stood like one amazed in the wind and the rain. The ordeal—in which the true sense of honour had conquered—had been a terrible one; and now that it was past, a feeling of exhaustion and utter bewilderment began to steal over her. She crept back to the house at last, through the shades

of the gathering twilight, only desiring in her weariness to lie down in some dark place where no eyes could see her face.

Mistress Delia met her young guest with some asperity of question and rebuke; for she had reached the stage of convalescence in which a patient is apt to be jealous of any neglect on the part of hitherto devoted attendants. She did not know the history of Beatrice's absence, and had no idea that the girl had been out in the storm, which brought on the dusk sooner than usual.

'I think you might meditate upon Sir Raymond Forrest's last words in the warm parlour as well as in your own cold chamber,' Madam Pettigrew said. 'He is not so vivacious as he was; I thought him dull company, until my anecdotes of poor Willie and Mr. Templar brightened him. 'Tis well that I can always talk, come what may.—But you look dull and spiritless as a Quaker at Christmas; and I warrant me you have forgot to order the hot elder wine for my supper.'

'Indeed, no, cousin; I remembered it,' said Beatrice, rousing herself. 'And here comes Joyce with the tray, in the nick of time to re-establish my character. But I fear I must leave you to sup alone, if you will excuse so early a disappearance. My head aches, and the lights swim before my eyes.'

So Mistress Beatrice went early to her little bed-chamber with the oriel-window, which looked out towards fair Goodrest. She lay awake through the long hours, half stupefied by the pain across her brow and eyes, yet listening and watching for she scarce knew what.

As the gray dawning broke over the hills, she started up, imagining that she heard the clash of swords and the groan of a wounded man. . . . And when, an hour later, the household began to stir, and the sun rose ruddy and clear above the October haze, there was no more sorrowful lady in broad England or Scotland to boot, than Mistress Beatrice Cope.

All the day she was feverish and restless, flitting from place to place; fulfilling her cousin's behests as usual, yet with thoughts far away upon the Scottish border. No speedy ending of suspense was to be looked for in those days; Beatrice knew not whether days or weeks might elapse ere she heard of her lover again.

Madam Pettigrew, as it happened, had a return of illness; and was, moreover, nervous as to the possible passage of the Earl of Mar's force, repeating many times that she wished she had bethought her to ask Sir Raymond to put Whiteoaks under military guardianship.

The afternoon was long and weary, the night

wearier still. And the next day Madam Pettigrew was still very ailing; and Beatrice felt a blank depression of mind which she fancied must be the harbinger of woe.

The autumn day had been fair and still, closing in with a glorious sunset; yet Beatrice thought that towards twilight Whiteoaks grew passing eerie and dismal. The ceilings were low, certainly, and the casements small; and the wide beams stood out heavily, darkening the rooms; but this had always been so—'twas nothing new to Beatrice Cope. She had seen the day glide into night, at Whiteoaks, many a time. Nevertheless, as she sat alone in the parlour, she fancied that the dusk never fell so drearily before, spreading itself through the rooms like a pall, and filling the corners with shadowy mystery.

Mistress Delia had gone to bed, ill at ease in body and mind; and Beatrice sat in one of the deep window-recesses, winding off yarn for knitting, and listening, with the curious automatic persistency of over-strained nerves, to every trifling sound which the still evening air wafted to her quick ears. Even the lowing of a cow from the pastures startled her; and by degrees a great foreboding of evil seized upon her spirit and held it captive.

The ball she was winding lay idle in her lap; she

sat motionless, scarce daring to move or to look out into the darkening garden, until one of the servants of the house entered the room to close the shutters and to bring lights.

'Hark, Patty!' said Beatrice, very softly, holding up her hand, but not changing her position. 'What noise is that, think you?'

Patty Joyce listened anxiously at the open window.

'Now Heaven ha' mercy, Madam Beatrice!' she whispered. 'The wild Highlanders be coming to fright and harry us!'

Sure enough, the measured tramp of men marching on foot in an unbroken order grew each moment more distinct. Sometimes it seemed lost for an instant—then it was heard again, louder than before; but there was no military music, no utterance of any word of command. Only the regular tread of many feet, in swift and silent advance, passing on through the evening shadows to some appointed bourne.

'They have turned down the hill from the high-road—they are pausing at the broken sign-post. . . . Yes, they are coming up the lane past this house. Patty, is Madam Pettigrew asleep?' asked Beatrice.

'Ay, madam; in a beautiful deep sleep, and Joan be sitting by her pillow,' said Patty. 'Them wild creeturs may give us the go-by, quiet and peaceable.

Heaven send she mayn't hear naught o' them and their screeching and skirling!'

With this fervent aspiration Patty made as though she would shut the window, and bar the heavy shutter across; but Beatrice signed to her to desist from her purpose, and hastily extinguished the lighted candle.

'We have not time,' she whispered. 'Let us be still.'

The whole house was open and defenceless in the twilight; but not a living thing stirred within as the unseen company marched by, and not a light twinkled at any of the windows. Madam Pettigrew slept like an infant; and Joan, her faithful guardian, sat quietly at her side. And down below Mistress Beatrice and Patty listened with bated breath to the rapid march.

'The Highlanders 'ud never be so quiet,' Patty murmured.

Then Beatrice, with one of her swift light movements, leant from the window out into the night; and as the departing file emerged from the deep shadow of the trees into the bare strip of road beyond, the light of the rising moon struck upon mourning cloaks and sable plumes, while in the midst a long black burden was borne swiftly and noiselessly upon the shoulders of men.

Beatrice drew back into the room.

'Here are no wild Highlanders, Patty,' she said. '"Tis the passing of a funeral train.'

'Eh, dear!' said Patty, looking out in her turn. 'And who can it be they're burying, Madam Beatrice?—One of the poor gentlemen, I reckon, as has been out for King James. They'll be laying him i' the little churchyard at Goodrest, at the midnight hour; 'tis the burying-place they favour; and they will have one of their clergy to say the service i' the old fashion. Dear, dear! I wish yon train may not be bearing Squire Templar's body home!—He be ever that forward and stirring in great matters, poor gentleman! But this may be some poor fellow that nobody knows; one of them that comes and goes from over-seas. They would bury him at Goodrest, like enough, if he was one of their following.'

Mistress Beatrice turned from the window with a long long sigh.

'You may close the shutters now,' she said. 'And, Patty, look well to the bolts and bars.'

With this she went up-stairs very softly, and looked into the room where Mistress Delia lay sleeping. And afterwards she came down again, and sought Patty in the houseplace, which seemed far more cheerful than the parlour that evening. 'Twas less lonesome, Mistress Beatrice thought, in the

houseplace with the red ashes of the fire glowing warmly, and the bright pewter trenchers and mugs shining against the wall, and the hams and flitches and ropes of onions hanging from the rafters, and Patty in the chimney-corner for company, than in the parlour where there were no signs of life. So she lighted a dip-candle, and sat down with her knitting, speaking a word to Patty now and again, in hopes to beguile her into some talk of village news.

But Patty Joyce, although as eager a gossip as Madam Pettigrew herself in a general way, was not to be enticed into any such cheerful discourse this evening. Instead of telling Mistress Beatrice Cope of weddings, christenings, blithe Harvest-Home suppers, and such-like matters, her mind turned to tales of weird superstition, such as were very unlikely to be serviceable in supporting the spirits of her auditor.

Patty had come to the conclusion that the funeral train which had gone silently past Whiteoaks was but an apparition, or a presentment, given as a warning of terrors yet to come. It meant, she said, that war would soon sweep from end to end of England. She had heard of such portents before; her grandfather remembered such in the days of King Charles the Martyr. . . . And 'twas an ill

thing to be chosen to look upon such strange unchancy sights; 'twas noticed that no good came to those who saw more than mortal eyes should. . . . And Patty now began to remember that the air felt very chill and piercing as she leant out to see the departing pageant. Was Mistress Beatrice sensible of the chill, she asked?—sure, 'twas more than common, after so warm a day for the season of the year?

'I was frightened, and therefore I shivered,' said Beatrice; 'but I am certain those tramping feet belonged to men of solid flesh and blood, Patty. How regular the tread was! methinks I hear it now. —I would I knew whose body they bore in the midst,' she added, trembling.

Patty Joyce shook her stolid head, firm in her own belief.

'Nay, nay, madam,' she said, 'never trouble your head to find that out. I warrant me 'twas no new corpse, but one that lacked Christian burial, maybe, in the wild fighting days Granfer do tell of. Eh, those were awesome days, Madam Beatrice! and 'tis like enough the ghosts of the old Ironsides are afoot now glad to think the hurly-burly is beginning over again. Kill, slay, and harry were ever the least words in their mouths; and 'twas wonderful the gift they had for reading of their Bibles backwards. 'Tis

an evil portent for the land, if the Ironsides walk in darkness, madam.'

'These men who terrified us but now were clothed after a different fashion from that which distinguished Cromwell's Ironsides, good Patty,' said Beatrice, with a faint little smile.

But Patty had no mind to yield up her position; and she proceeded to tell one horrible story after another, in defence of her conviction, until at last, being weary with butter-making in the fore part of the day, she dozed off in the chimney corner, the horrors she recounted proving quite powerless to keep her awake.

And Mistress Beatrice continued to knit; and as she knitted it seemed to her as though her senses, little by little, did resolve themselves into that of acute hearing. She listened breathlessly, as one who awaits a call, while Patty Joyce dozed in the chimney corner, and the fire burnt low and red. At last the cuckoo clock in the parlour struck ten, with a great whirr and vibration which could be heard all over the house; and Patty stirred then, having slept her sleep out, and knowing in her heart that 'twas bedtime and past.

And even as she moved and rubbed her eyes, quick pattering steps came round the angle of the house.

'What time be this, Madam Beatrice?' said Patty, waking up angered, because she had overslept herself. Fine time this for decent folks to be sitting up, a-wasting of fire and candle! And me a-nodding here, knowing naught o' the hour.'

While Patty was yet muttering to herself, there was a sound of light tapping upon the stout oak of the door; and Mistress Beatrice Cope rose up very pale, with the look of one who hears an expected summons which brooks no delay.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THAT summons, which was very soft and low, and might have been but the beating of bare hands upon the massive door, startled Patty Joyce broad awake on the instant. She threw herself in the young lady's path, making signs to Mistress Beatrice to wait, and to be still. And Mistress Beatrice paused where she stood, with white face and dilated eyes.

But the knocking came again, yet more vehement and more fluttered; as though some creature were beating itself against the door, eager to attract attention and gain admittance, though fearful of making over-much noise.

And when it became clear that somebody, good or bad, was without, Patty, having regard to the lateness of the hour and the probability of supernatural visitations, was much disposed to make as though the knocking were unheard, and to creep quietly off to bed. But Mistress Beatrice prevailed upon her to depart from this prudent course; and the two

peered from an upper window to see who stood before the door.

At first they could see no one; but presently a little figure stepped back from the shadow, looking up to the window above; and Beatrice Cope, although she discerned not the face, felt more than ever certain that this summons was for her.

'Tis but a child there without, Patty,' she said. 'Maybe 'tis some poor little creature that has lost its way, and come here for help and shelter. Heaven forbid that we should leave it to wander about, all the dreary night through!'

Patty's fears were not much calmed by the sight of this lonely child. 'Twas the Phantom Child, she murmured, who comes wailing piteously to honest folks' doors o' nights; and if they take it in and cherish it, it works them grievous woe.

Mistress Beatrice, however, tried to hear as little as she might of what Patty was saying; and she went down-stairs and undid the heavy bar very cautiously. Then she opened the door a little space; and Patty Joyce stood by her staunchly, although disapproving of that which she did.

And when the door was opened, this persevering applicant proved to be only the boy Bill Lampeter, who was known at Whiteoaks as at Crowe Hall, and a score of country Granges beside. He did but crave

a drink of milk and a bit to eat, he said. He had been a-foot all day, and had had nought to eat; and seeing a light burning in the houseplace, he made bold to knock and ask for what he needed.

The boy's breath was short and hurried, and his grimy face was pale and damp with toil or hard running. He did not seek to enter, but kept glancing over his shoulder into the darkness behind him.

Beatrice sent Patty for food and drink, standing still herself in the doorway; and the maid was no sooner gone than the boy drew nearer, and spoke.

'Oh, mistress,' he said, hoarsely, 'I have been beat to-night—but I told 'em nought. The corporal he raddled my bones terrible—but I set my teeth, and I told 'un nought. I bit him when he took they shining white things o' yourn, wi' the writing; them as I could not give to Mr. Cope, the day I warned the porter at Goodrest that the red-coats was upon 'em. I had the white things safe, mistress, hid in my smock'—(he put his hand to his breast, where the rough garment he wore was heavily quilted and closely drawn).—'And I would ha' giv' them to Mr. Cope, the first chance I got—I would, honest and true. But the scouting-party caught me; and they says, "Thee be allays running from one Grange to another, thee little ne'er-do-weel; thee can tell us what we wants to know about Goodrest in the hills."

—And I were telling of 'em just what tales comed into my head, for fear of unpleasantness, mistress; when the corporal, a great rough chap, seizes hold of me, and says, says he, "'Tis all a pack o' lies, this here. Search him," he says, "and see if he carries messages or tokens." And then I fought and bit, for I know'd they'd find your bright things in my smock; and I bit his hand nigh upon through, that I did,' said Bill, with grim satisfaction, and an oath at which poor Beatrice shuddered.

'Oh, hush!' she said. 'There is no help in swearing, boy.'

'*He* swore,' Bill replied. 'But when he got the tablets, he were fine and pleased. And he said, "This is a stag of ten, my boys; and should he snuff the breeze too soon we have means to keep him where he is till morning. Hold that little viper fast," says he, "and for your lives don't let him give us the slip."—So one of the troopers took me behind him on his horse, with a rope round my body, drawn cruel tight at first. And I panted, and groaned, and made as though he were killing of me; and after a bit he slacked the rope a little, so as I could put my head down and gnaw it through in the dark. And at the dip of a valley, where the shadow was deep under the trees, I slipped off quiet-like into the long grass. He knew the rope was loose in a minute,

and he snapped his pistol; but the covert was good, and I crope into the heart of a holler tree covered o'er wi' ivy. I bided there, till they was tired o' hunting round.—But oh, mistress, the poor gentleman at Goodrest is undone!—They talked together while the trooper were making me fast upon his horse; and I heared a word now and again, for I listened with all my might. There were but four of 'em; and they said they weren't strong enough to surprise Goodrest, but must ride back to quarters for help. And as we went past Grantford Farm, the corporal called a halt; and one held his horse while he went in and spoke with the farmer. And, mistress, Hugh Stone of Grantford is known for a bitter Whig. . . . And presently Hugh of Grantford comes out, and his little brother with him; and the boy had that as you wrote upon—that as they took from me—in his hand. And the corporal says, looking over his shoulder quick and short, "Does he understand?" says he. "Oh, aye," says Hugh of Grantford, "he understands fine." And I could see wee Jock did not like the job he were put upon; and I made a face at him from ahint the trooper's back, and he liked it less nor ever then.'

'What job, Bill?'

Bill Lampeter looked in amazement at this beautiful, terrified lady who did not understand.

'Don't 'ee see?' he said. 'Jock o' Grantford were to take your writing to Goodrest, and play upon the gentleman there, to keep him biding till the red-coats come. What were it as you wrote down that day, mistress?'

As in a flash of painful memory Beatrice saw the dainty tablets once more, with words traced upon them in a hand rendered somewhat unsteady by the slow pace of the sorrel horse—a hand unmistakable, however, to the eyes of Charlie Cope.

'I pray you, do not stir far from home. There is risk abroad.

'B. C.'

She understood then; and she turned quickly to Patty Joyce, who had come back bringing bread and milk ere Bill's tale was half done. Bill, even in the eagerness of his disclosure, had clutched the bread and cheese; and now he drained the mug of milk, while the good-natured maid stood open-mouthed, her eyes fixed upon Mistress Beatrice.

'Patty,' the young lady whispered, 'I think you are faithful and true. . . . I must trust you with a perilous secret. This gentleman whom they seek at Goodrest is my only brother; he has papers of importance in his keeping, and a warrant is out for his arrest. They will lure him to his destruction by

means of me, his sister; he knows my handwriting, and will trust to my warning. He will lie close at Goodrest, as a hare upon her form; and they will take him—oh! they will take him prisoner!—ere morning dawns. I must to Goodrest now, in the dark night.—Boy! is there time? is there time?'

Bill Lampeter nodded, munching his bread.

'They'll not be back afore the dawning, them troopers,' he said. 'They've limed the twig, ye see; the bird is made fast. If Mr. Cope do hear the country's up, he'll bide where he be there at Goodrest, reckoning 'tis safest to keep still. Between now and the first streak as shows over the Black Scaur, mistress, you can do as you will.'

'Eh, Mistress Beatrice, you can't never go,' said Patty, trembling. 'You couldn't dare to do it. And this here boy,' she whispered, standing close to Mistress Beatrice, 'is a very proverb for wicked story-telling. 'Tis a naughty little varlet; who knows that he has not been set on to bring this tale?'

' 'Tis true enough, though I be a story-teller,' said Bill, whose ears were sharp. 'You gentleman at Goodrest has need of thee the night, mistress. And now let me lie down on the straw in the big barn, for my bones do ache, and I be dizzy wi' running.'

He caught at the doorpost as he spoke; and Patty

Joyce's suspicions vanished in pity for the worn-out creature. She kindled a flame to light the lanthorn which hung in the houseplace; and herself crossed the wide courtyard to make Bill a comfortable resting-place in the soft hay and clean straw which filled the great barn.

While Patty was absent on this errand, Mistress Beatrice knelt down and prayed very earnestly, being amazed and troubled, though desirous not to flinch from this great venture. Then she donned her riding-cloak and hood, and crossed the yard to meet the returning Patty.

'Patty,' she said, 'I must go where I am called; and I doubt not to be taken care of.'

And Patty, looking into the resolute young face, strove no more to hinder her, but unbarred the stable-door to fetch the saddle for Madam Pettigrew's pony, Grizzel.

Grizzel was out at grass still, though the autumn nights grew sharp; for she was a rough-coated animal of much hardihood and endurance. Grizzel knew Mistress Beatrice well; and now she came hurrying across her paddock at the first call, as if this strange summons were the very thing she expected and liked best.

So there was no difficulty in catching Grizzel; and at this moment the sky, which had been some-

what overcast, cleared suddenly, the clouds parting from the face of the moon like a veil hastily withdrawn. The broad beams of cold pale light turned the flame of Patty's lanthorn dim; and she hastily puffed it out, while Mistress Beatrice, with nimble fingers, fastened the saddle upon Grizzel's back.

The breaking of the darkness, and the comfort of feeling Grizzel's warm nose rubbing against her arm in assurance of good fellowship and protection, cheered Mistress Beatrice mightily. Her eyes grew bright, and her colour came back, as she tugged at the girths; and when she sprang into the saddle from the post by the gate, she was more at ease in her mind than she had been since the dusk began to fall.

'Have no fear for me, good Patty,' she said. 'Only do not sleep too sound this night. Be ready to let me in again, when the first cock crows.'

Then she rode away down the narrow winding lane, into the dark shadows where the boughs of the elm and oak-trees met and entwined themselves overhead.

Dear heart! How sombre it was beneath the dense foliage, though the moon shone so bright and clear in the sky! 'Twas light as day elsewhere; the moonlight might have been taken for sunlight, but

for the absence of warmth and glow, and the sharp black shadows which belonged not to the genial world of day.

The pony plunged down into the deep blackness of the lane, where moonbeams only penetrated in faint straggling rays; and truly the heart of the rider beat apace at first adventuring the descent. The lane seemed lonely, and dark, and awesome; and Mistress Beatrice remembered the passing by of that mysterious funeral train at the dusk-hour, and felt a thrill of superstitious fear. But Grizzel, being used to the moonshine and the shadows, trotted on cheerfully, putting down her hoofs with good assurance.

And Beatrice called up her resolution, and rested her hand upon the pony's neck to feel the warm life near, and strove to put away dread. She too began to grow accustomed to the sights and sounds of night. First, a rabbit scudded across the path; then a bat came flying wildly past, pursued by a great white owl, which hooted loud and drearily.

Beatrice Cope was thinking that soon she should be quit of the lonely lanes, and amid the cottage habitations of Whitecross Village, when she was startled by a crashing through the boughs and underwood of a copse at the left-hand side; and forth from the hedge sprang the very boy whose words had

brought her out. He seized the pony by the bridle; and Beatrice, remembering in what plight she had seen him last, repented her much that she had not hearkened to Patty's advice. What if he had but feigned pain and weariness?—What if the whole story were but a decoy to entrap her into peril?—And yet a moment's reflection caused her to doubt her terrors; especially as no one else followed the boy's bound into the road.

'Let go my bridle,' she said, in a low, firm voice. 'I go upon the errand you know of, to save life.'

Bill Lampeter nodded intelligence, and released Grizzel.

'Go round—go not through Whitecross Village, mistress,' he said. 'There be spies there—Hugh of Grantford went that way with wee Jock. I ran across the fields to tell 'ee, though I be stiff.'

He drew aside to let the pony pass by; and Beatrice turned her head to put some further question. For answer he only called, 'Make speed!' in the tone of one who would fain shout, but fears to be overheard should he raise his voice. Wherefore Beatrice shook the bridle-rein, which was all the urging good Grizzel needed, and spoke to her to encourage her to go fleetly.

And the pony set forth at her smoothest canter, crushing out sweet scents from the dewy herbage at

the side of the road with her flying hoofs. The lane widened hereabouts; and Grizzel made little noise in cantering on the grass, so that Mistress Beatrice could hear any sounds which might be abroad on the quiet air.

More than once she thought she heard strange wild cries breaking the stillness, yet had no certainty that these noises were aught but the hooting of owls and the screams of other night birds. At the foot of the lane, where three roads meet, and the river flows with scarce perceptible current towards the distant sea, she drew rein and paused to listen. . . . Surely somewhat more than common was astir in Whitecross Village, not very many yards away? Mistress Beatrice listened again, holding herself perfectly still, in order to hear the better.

Without doubt a subdued hum of voices rose upon the ear; and presently she saw that the little alehouse called 'The Silent Woman' was brightly lighted up. Doubtless the troopers were in possession of Whitecross Village, on their way to Goodrest.

Beatrice stayed not to hearken further, but urged the pony forward, though not towards the village on her left. She guided the willing pony down the steepest and most uneven of the three roads, to the bridge which spanned the river. 'Twas a narrow

bridge, meant only for foot-passengers, and without so much as a hand-rail for security; but Beatrice Cope knew that by crossing this perilous pass she could reach Goodrest speedily.

She did not hesitate, therefore; although Grizzel paused upon the brink in alarm, trying to look back at her rider, with a faint whinnying noise. The frail support creaked and swayed beneath the weight of the stout little pony; Beatrice long remembered how deep and dark the river looked, as she rode across the narrow planking, and gazed down into the black waters, swollen by a day and a night of heavy rain.—And indeed, had the wood-work given way, Mistress Beatrice Cope's young life must have had a speedy and a tragic ending.—But lo! the danger was scarce realized ere it was past, and Grizzel trod firm upon solid earth again.

Beatrice was desperate then with the desire of haste. To her it seemed that she had been hours upon the road; and the generous-hearted animal she rode could hardly content her, even while breasting the hill most gallantly.

But the worst terror of all was yet to come, when, in the broad white moonlight, Mistress Beatrice saw the figure of a man advancing towards her, down the lane which led from Goodrest. Dark shadow lay between them, in which this apparition was soon

lost: yet Beatrice knew that she must pass him by presently, seen or unseen—would he catch at her pony?—would he seek to stop her in her course?

A sick faintness of terror came over her then; a tremor unfelt before threatened to unnerve mind and hand. In her heart she cried to the Strong Protector of the Helpless—to Him whose Angel-legions go forth into the dark places of the earth, to succour all those who put their trust in God.

And indeed to Mistress Beatrice Cope, alone in the mysterious night-shadows and stillness, far from human help and human protection, and with the issues of life and death hanging upon such poor speed as she could make, it seemed that the solitary lane grew suddenly bright, and that One all in white walked with her through the dangerous way. . . . The darkness closed in upon her instantly; but she was no more afraid. She touched the pony lightly with the little switch she carried; and Grizzel sprang forward at a gallop, notwithstanding the obscurity and the uncertain footing.

Beatrice never knew who or what she passed in that dark lane. But one Hugh Stone of Grantford, engaged that night in somewhat questionable service, was wont to tell his grandchildren in after years how a lady rode past him, even brushing against his arm,

on her way to warn a man betrayed to death; and he had no power to stop her. And the matter dwelt upon his mind, working a strange alteration in the character and mode of life of the aforesaid Hugh Stone.

CHAPTER XXV.

ARRIVED at Goodrest, Mistress Beatrice Cope had to attract the attention of the porter at the lodge—a thing not easily done, since Job Eccles followed the prudent policy of Patty Joyce at Whiteoaks, in declining to respond to the summons at the hearing of which he quaked.

Presently, however, the fear of giving offence conquered other fear with him; and he emerged from his little lodge, wearing his nightcap on his head, and a somewhat ostentatious appearance of extreme sleepiness on his face. But when he saw only a lady upon a pony, his carefully prepared explanations and apologies died away, and he became suddenly very wide awake.

'Eh, mistress!' he said, 'here be a fool's hazard! The gentleman you wot of had your token and your message; he is safe within, and will keep close till these storms blow over.'

'Nevertheless, I come on no fool's hazard,' said

Beatrice Cope. 'There has been treachery, Job Eccles. Open the gate, and let me pass through. You will have to open it again ere long, to those who will endure brief delays: yet use what reasonable slowness you can, for each minute gained may be of service to us this night.'

'A dolorous and a weary night, madam,' the old man groaned, as he swung back the heavy gate. Then, coming close to her pommel, he whispered, 'They brought the Squire's body home by the hill-path but two short hours ago. The Government soldiers cut off a party of honest gentlemen who were seeking to join the Earl of Mar. Mr. Templar fell, and several others. His body lies i' the Church to-night.'

Beatrice bowed her head, shivering a little. Was this the encounter which words of hers might have prevented? She thought not, since the gentlemen against whom Sir Raymond Forrest went out were coming from Scotland into England. But the old pain, deadened by the night's excitement and dread, revived again, as she wondered what had occurred upon the Border.

She rode nearly to the house; and then turned aside into the large orchard-ground, presently slipping from her saddle, and tethering Grizzel to an apple-tree which seemed to be somewhat screened from

observation. To be able to find the pony quickly was important; yet Beatrice dared not leave her good little steed too much in evidence, lest the sight of the animal should reveal all to those who might presently follow. She tied Grizzel fast to the tree, stroking her, and beseeching her to be still and make no noise; and Grizzel arched a loving neck, and caressed the little hands in dumb assurance of faithfulness.

Then Mistress Beatrice sped like the wind to the postern door which gave entrance to the garden. Alas! it was locked, fast and sure. She saw no lights along the façade of the house, where the chief entrance was; and she feared lest knocking there might only excite alarm and confusion in the household. Then she remembered the Church. A watch would doubtless be kept within the holy precincts that night; Charlie himself, not improbably, might be one of the watchers. Quick as thought she ran round the boundary of the garden, stumbling now and then against rugged stones and roots of trees. The little Church of S. Bride was lighted up, as Beatrice expected; and a sound of subdued chanting, in which women's voices preponderated, came floating out on the night air. She stepped into the deep porch, and waited a moment, gaining breath.

Then, with her two hands, she tried to lift the

heavy iron latch. It did not yield; but through a small grating at the side of the door a woman's face looked out. The face might have been that of a pictured saint, as it looked down, sweet and calm and pale, upon the agitated countenance which gazed back again in imploring appeal.

'Agnes! Agnes!'

The voice was faint as the sighing of a distant wind.

'There is treachery! I must speak with my brother instantly. Where is he?—oh, where is he?'

'Hush!' came the whispered answer from within; and Agnes Ingram moved a little aside from the grating, pointing with her lifted hand towards the east end of the Church.

Before the chancel steps a bier rested upon trestles; beside it, his figure thrown into strong relief by the light of surrounding wax candles which made a patch of brightness in the dark Church, knelt one man, alone. His face was hidden; but Beatrice Cope knew the kneeling figure well.

The moments seemed long until this watcher rose, stepping back into the dimmer part of the Church with a dazed expression on his face. In that instant Agnes Ingram went swiftly forward, and laid a light hand upon his arm.

Beatrice from without saw the instinctive start—

the bending of his head to listen—the glance, keen, alert, direct, which shot from his blue eyes as the first hint of pressing danger made its way to his brain. He had lived in peril, and knew how to meet it. One look he cast towards the bier on which the body of his dead friend lay; then he followed Agnes Ingram, with a firm yet noiseless tread. The heavy door opened, and closed; and Beatrice clung to her brother's arm as the three stood together in the porch, beneath the rudely sculptured image of S. Bride.

'Heaven be praised that I have found you!' she gasped, her strength failing in the inexpressible relief of being no longer alone.

The light of the waning moon and the clear stars vanished from her eyes, and a rushing sound filled her ears, while a spell of silence seemed to be laid upon the tongue which yet knew that it ought to speak.

'She will faint,' said Charles Cope to Agnes Ingram; and the sound of his voice recalled his sister to herself.

'You have been played upon,' she said, with feverish rapidity. 'You should not be here an instant longer—if, indeed, there is yet time for escape. Bill Lampeter, the boy you told me I might trust, was robbed this evening of my tablets, on

which I wrote a message for you when I left Crowe Hall.'

'I see,' said young Cope, as her breath failed. 'I had those tablets this evening, by a strange hand. The message was not what I expected, for we had had hints that 'twould be well to take wing from Goodrest; but I knew not how you might be pressed for means of communication, and did not doubt that the warning sent was bonâ-fide.—We can make no defence here; there is scarce a man about the place who is not nigher eighty than seventy. The rest have other gear in hand to-night, and small time to spare for funeral obsequies.—Hist! what do I hear? Mistress Ingram, I think we are like to be unduly hurried in this matter.'

Agnes Ingram put her arm about Beatrice's shoulder.

'Dear child,' she whispered, 'do not fear; all will be well. We have ways and means for our own security here at Goodrest.'

Then, turning her head quickly, she addressed Charles Cope.

'They will search the Church first,' she said, 'and that will take time. Swiftly, Mr. Cope, after me—we may yet find the side door unlocked.'

'Twas dark as pitch in the yew-tree walk, but Agnes knew every step of the way. She went first,

fleet, sure, and silent; young Cope followed, supporting his sister. But even as they drew near the house, the sound which had attracted Charlie's attention was more plainly heard from within; bolts were being shot, and keys turned in locks which groaned and creaked.

'A shrewd pinch this,' the young man muttered, beneath his breath. 'Why have they chosen this moment to lose their wits within there, when a grain or two of sense might save a crown, not to mention sundry heads, each one of special value to the owner thereof?'

'I left Grizzel tied to an apple-tree in the orchard, could we but win to her,' said Beatrice, in agitation.

'Ah! pardon me for detaining you thus; but I must fetch my papers, and various small matters. 'Twere better far that these fellows took me than my effects.—Mistress Ingram, I must prevail upon those within to admit us, if any persuasion of mine can conquer their panic.'

He rapped at the door, pausing between the strokes, and sorely frettèd by the delay which ensued ere the frightened portress discovered that she was keeping out her own friends. Probably the time thus wasted was not as long as in semblance it appeared. Agnes Ingram clasped her hands, and stood very still, looking upwards; Beatrice beat

upon the ground with her little foot, and listened with feverish apprehension to each distant sound.

Presently a dog barked, sharp and loud.

'The soldiers are before the gate!' cried Beatrice, in an agony. Charles Cope shrugged his shoulders in wordless impatience: Agnes Ingram drew a long breath, and her lips moved silently.

But the portress within had by this time recognized the voice which asked admission; and she laboriously undid the bolts which she had been in haste to make fast.

She was a little stout woman of fifty, dressed as were all the other women at Goodrest; and she bore in her hand a small lamp. Her face wore an expression of alarm mingled with perplexity, as though somewhat she greatly dreaded had come suddenly upon her.

'There are soldiers before the lodge,' she said, trembling, 'and I judged that those of us who are in the Church would surely remain there. I feared that the knocking was but a device of the enemy to gain entrance——'

'Good Ursula,' said Charles Cope, in a voice as light and cheerful as though peril and uncertainty existed not for him, 'I pray you, let us pass in; and then make sure the bolts as best you may, and hold such parley with any one who knocks as your quick

wits can devise, while I put together a few matters of some moment. Gain for us a brief ten minutes, and then make these gentlemen red-coats welcome to a free entrance.—Was not that a happy compliment, Mistress Ingram?' he whispered, as the three crossed the hall in haste. 'Quick wits, save the mark! duller, I think, can scarce have had a chance of wrecking a fair enterprise.—When the door is once opened, your part in this play begins. You must lead ces messieurs, whose intellects, let us hope, move with British slowness and deliberation, through the house, trusting naught to our excellent Ursula's fertility of resource. Will you wait a moment with Beatrice here? I will rejoin you instantly.'

They were by this time in a small octagonal hall, which Beatrice had not entered during her brief stay at Goodrest. The part of the house in which she now found herself was strange to her; but her companions evidently knew it well.

Charles Cope sprang up a narrow winding stair at headlong speed; Agnes and Beatrice waited below, clasping each other's hands.

The hall was lighted by eight lancet windows, filled with painted glass; and in all her terror and anxiety Beatrice watched the gorgeous reflections which were cast on the floor and walls, as the moonbeams streamed through the richly-hued panes. Her

mind worked in a curious involuntary way, as though it belonged to some other person who had nothing else to do but endeavour to discern the subjects depicted in each window through which the radiance struck.

'Twas upon a figure of Hope, leaning on her anchor, with a beautiful steadfast face, that Beatrice was gazing when she heard the quick reverberation of horses' feet at a trot. There was a sudden pause—a word of command sharply spoken; the well-known summons, 'Open, in the King's name!'

And at that moment Charles Cope dashed down the stairs, thrusting a packet, hastily wrapped together, into the breast of his coat.

'Caught!' he said. 'Mistress Agnes, does the plot hold good? How shall we do?'

Beatrice scarcely heard the murmured colloquy which followed, so intent was she upon the sounds without.

Presently Agnes said,

'The outside stairs, Mr. Cope—the pleasance—the path which winds by the fish-ponds, keeping to the left among the walnut-trees. 'Tis a great hazard——'

'But there is a chance,' young Cope replied. 'And you—have you nerve to remain, and play the part we agreed upon?'

'Surely, surely. Heaven speed you! Now—now; this way.'

Oh, the painful effort of that toilsome ascent, to the summit of the winding dizzy stair towards which Agnes beckoned! Round and round they went, up the corkscrew windings, with occasional glimpses into depths below towards which Beatrice dared not look, lest her head, already light with excitement and fatigue, should begin to swim and her limbs should fail.

Agnes' parting whisper—'Courage, dear heart!'—still sounded in her ears as she climbed, following Charlie, whose pace might not have been quite so rapid had he known with what agony of nervous effort his sister toiled after him.

The tower was high—higher than any other part of Goodrest; and from its summit one could see into Scotland. As the brother and sister reached the top, the cool night air, intensified into that sharp penetrating cold which comes before the dawning, beat upon their faces with reviving force; the steps became easier towards the close; and Charles Cope helped his sister through an aperture which a door may once have filled, out upon the parapet whence by daylight a glorious view can be discerned. They saw no view then; only the sky glittering with a myriad stars, the pale moon waning towards her

setting, the dark clumps of trees dotting garden and park.

'Now, Beatrice, for the test of your courage!' said Charlie, in that mirthful voice of his. ''Tis but a few steps—awkward, I grant you, but my hand is sure and strong—and we are upon the leads before the window of my room. From thence the stairs are broad and easy; we shall baffle these gentry to admiration, yet.—Stay, let me go before you; you will need help.'

'Twas indeed a perilous scramble, and one which by daylight, with time to think, and a mind at leisure to consider the danger of a false step, Beatrice Cope could not have brought herself to essay. But now she swung herself from point to point, clinging to tough ivy strands, and reaching forward towards Charlie's helping hand.

The young man had his own misgivings; he knew well enough that the slightest accident might precipitate them both into the depths below. Once a bat flew from the ivy into his very face; and his footing, for a second, was well-nigh gone. And, even then, he thought not of his sister—thought not of himself—but only of those papers and that money lying upon his heart, the loss of which would be fatal to 'The Cause.' But he recovered his balance, with bleeding hands and wrenched joints; and lifted his

sister down the last broken steps, speaking in low tones to reassure her, though he felt no great assurance himself. For they were in a very precarious position, now that they had reached this terrace-walk upon the leads.

The window of the room Charlie had occupied, which looked out upon this walk, was rendered narrow by stone mullions, so that a return to the house was impossible by that means. The only hope of escape lay in a successful descent to the pleasance; and as they paused upon the leads, keeping carefully in shadow of a projecting buttress, they heard the tread of a sentry below, pacing to and fro upon the paved walk.

Mr. Cope felt the dispassionate admiration of a soldier for an enemy who has been quick and prompt in his measures.

'They have us in a trap,' he whispered, drawing his sword; 'but all is not lost, while good steel remains.'

'Hush!—one moment!' said Beatrice, breathlessly.

Some person had approached the sentry, and a few words were exchanged in an undertone. The low, gruff voices ascended clearly enough to where Charlie and Beatrice stood.

'A queer old nest this, brother,' said the man first

on duty. 'Haunted, eh? These old rookeries mostly are.'

'Haunted with Jacobites, Tom Pierce,' growled the other.

'Didst ever see a ghost, theeself?' asked the first speaker.

'Not I, in faith.'

'My father did—here, at Goodrest,' said number one, evidently ill at ease. 'He was gardener here afore I were born. Many's the tale he told us little 'uns of a lady in white, that passes across the pleasance-ground to the ponds as the day breaks, and is lost in the water. 'Tis the ghost of one as drownded herself for love of a wicked French lord, in the days before the Restoration; and she walks still —that a does. When father were nigh upon his latter end, I ast him were the tale true? "Aye, Tom," he says, "'tis true as gospel; and if you bide underneath the old tower at Goodrest and watch for the dawning, happen thee may see her pass," says he.—But I ne'er tried it. I weren't that set upon seeing ghostesses, not I.—Thee'lt share my watch, brother? Two men be better nor one, in these unchancy places.'

'Aye,' replied the comrade thus appealed to. 'I will but fetch my weapon from the corporal yonder, and be with 'ee in a trice.'

He passed on; and the brother and sister knew that their last chance had come. With the speed of lightning Beatrice slipped off the dark cloak which enveloped her.

A faint gray streak was beginning to show in the east, and a cock crew, welcoming the dawn with shrill salute, as the slim figure of Mistress Beatrice Cope glided down the stone steps, noiseless and swift. Her light gown showed white in the darkness; her steps were not heard. She passed the astonished sentry like a flash of dim, mysterious radiance; impalpable, unearthly, as the dawn itself. . . . Away, over the frosty grass towards the fish-ponds . . . aye, aye! 'twas even so with the shadowy lady of Goodrest, who drowned herself for love of the wicked French lord long ago.

Honest Tom Pierce felt his hair rise upon his head, as the ghostly visitant floated past his post; and a cold dew broke out upon his forehead while he turned his head to watch the course of the apparition.

Of all superstitions, those imbibed in childhood live longest and die hardest; and Tom Pierce had trembled at his father's tale of the Goodrest lady, when he was a little urchin with a curly head, hiding his face on his mother's knee.

But Tom, although his belief in the marvellous

knew no bounds, was brave as a lion where aught of flesh and blood was concerned; and when a dark figure, muffled and disguised, sought to follow the white lady, he struck at it at once with a good will and scant ceremony. Tom, unfortunately, had never heard that the ghost of the wicked French lord followed that of his victim to the scene of her last wild, fatal act. More practical ideas occurred to his mind at once, as he grappled with a strong young man completely armed.

The sentry was a more powerful man than Charles Cope, as to thews and sinews, his build was heavier, his grip that of an iron vice. But the Jacobite gentleman was desperate; and there is no strength so irresistible as that born of desperation. Also, he was prepared for the encounter, whereas Tom Pierce, for the instant, was off his guard.

The struggle between them was almost instantaneous, and absolutely silent, the sentry having no power to let off his pistol or to sound an alarm. . . .

Three minutes later, Charles Cope was at his sister's side once more, and Tom Pierce lay motionless, staring up at the sky with fast-glazing eyes, while a dull crimson stain spread slowly over the gray stones of the paved walk beneath 'The Lady's Tower.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE brother and sister threaded the mazes of the pleasance, passed beyond the fish-ponds, struck into the orchard, and found the pony tied where Beatrice had left her, but trembling and very cold.

'Will he raise an alarm?' asked Beatrice, as her brother, panting from recent exertion, muffled her once more in the dark cloak.

'*He* will not,' young Cope replied. 'The other will—when he comes back. Let us hope that he may be delayed. We must make the best use we can of a short start. Thank Heaven, I know the windings of these lanes indifferent well.'

'And Grizzel is very fleet,' said Beatrice. 'Can you keep up with her, think you?'

'She may trot her fastest,' he answered, laconically; and he encouraged the pony after the manner of men who know the equine nature well, and treat every horse they have to do with as they might a human friend.

And then in the gray dawning a flight began which Mistress Beatrice Cope was like to remember to the latest hour she had to live. They dared not advance straight upon Whiteoaks, but made a long détour, circling among the recesses of the stern Northumbrian dales.

The eastern sky turned from gray to red, from red to golden yellow; the birds twittered in the hedgerows, and then sang out blithely to greet a new day. And the piercing cold of the daybreak hour lost something of its intense keenness, as the sun climbed the edge of the horizon, the earliest rays falling upon that lofty tower of Goodrest in the hills.

At sunrise Charlie Cope paused to let the pony breathe, and her rider rest; while he recruited his own powers a little by leaning upon a gate drinking in the fresh morning breeze. And he said, in a voice somewhat hoarse yet mirthful too, that the pursuit was baffled, thanks to Grizzel's speed, and the manifold windings of the lanes. And he hummed the air his sister used to sing,

> 'Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
> With night we banish sorrow.'

He was glad and light-hearted now, giving small thought to the manner of their escape, since 'twas like to end well for himself and those he served.

But upon Mistress Beatrice Cope came all the tremor, all the weariness, all the agony of the silent hours gone by; and she bowed her head and wept in the glory of the rising sun, her delicate frame shaken by sobs she could not check.

Then the young man blamed himself for not having seen her exhaustion sooner; and he brought water as best he could from a fresh little spring which bubbled forth from the hillside, calling himself many hard names the while. He sprinkled her forehead with the cold drops, and made her drink from a large leaf dexterously twisted into a cup, loosening her hood and supporting her with a hand as gentle as a woman's, though 'twas the same which had dealt Tom Pierce his death-blow.

And Beatrice roused herself to conquer the passing weakness, sitting erect in her saddle once more, and pushing back her drooping hair, all straight and dank with the dews of night.

'Charlie, did you kill him?' she asked faintly, when the first sip of water had done its reviving work.

'Him! Whom do you mean?—Oh, the sentry yonder!—In good truth I can scarcely say, sweet one. 'Twas no moment for measuring force,' he answered, lightly and carelessly. 'The point of importance is that you and I find ourselves here, safe and sound.—Beatrice, we are closer to Whiteoaks than you, maybe,

are aware of. You have but to hold straight on till you pass yon clump of trees, and you will see the gate into the West Croft scarce twenty paces from you.'

'But you! what will you do?—Come with me, Charlie; we can surely find some shelter wherein you may lie close.'

'No, no; that were treating Madam Pettigrew too unfairly. If she harbours me under these circumstances, it must be with her own knowledge and good-will. See, I will remain hidden in this wood for the present; and, should Mistress Delia incline to give me a night's lodging, you can send that maladroit young marplot, Master Bill, with a message when the shadows lengthen. I warrant me you will find him skulking about, to know the upshot of this night's work.—And hark in your ear, Beatrice. Send me food at sunset, if you rob larder and buttery, hen-roost and dairy. I shall have an appetite, do not doubt.'

'May I not despatch the boy sooner? You will be famished,' she said.

He laughed gaily.

'You think a mighty deal of a day's fast, pretty sugar-plum that you are! No, not an hour sooner; we must run no unnecessary risks.'

Then he added, in a tone which became suddenly tender and earnest,

'You are a brave lady, little Beatrice, to have been nourished to womanhood among Whigs and Hanoverians!—A brave lady, upon my honour!'

And with these words still sounding in her ears, Mistress Beatrice Cope rode through the gate into the West Croft, unfastened the saddle from Grizzel's back, and turned the creature loose with many caresses from weary little hands, to pick up her juicy breakfast from the rich autumn grass. She put away the saddle in its accustomed place; and, as she crossed the courtyard after doing this, she met one of the men employed in Madam Pettigrew's service, just coming in to his day's work.

'The top o' the morning to 'ee, mistress,' he said, staring somewhat at the wan girl, whose garments hung about her damp and limp.

'Jesse,' said Beatrice, knowing that he had seen and marked too much, and would presently discover the pony's condition, 'will you look to poor Grizzel, in the West Croft, before any one else comes about the place? She is hot and overridden; she has done hard service to-night. She needs to be rubbed down, and comforted with a warm mash. Will you do me this service? I know you can keep counsel.'

She drew out her little silk purse, and held it towards Jesse Ford; but he made no motion to take

the gift, merely looking at her with grave pitying eyes, in which there was no lack of respect.

'Your bidding 'ull be done, Mistress Beatrice,' he said. 'I will look to Grizzel, poor beastie; and I will keep a still tongue in my head, likewise. I baint made i' the fashion o' they women-folk, as must clatter all day, whether or no.—Heaven ha' mercy on thee!' he muttered, as he turned away.

Then Beatrice crept to the threshold of the house; and Patty Joyce had the door open in a trice, not knowing whether to laugh or to weep at sight of her.

'I was in time, Patty,' poor Beatrice whispered. 'All is well, so far.—And now let me lie down and be still awhile—I am wearied out.'

Patty Joyce half-led, half-carried the exhausted girl to Madam Pettigrew's guest-chamber; and there Beatrice fell into a deep dreamless sleep which was almost like a swoon. She left herself in Patty's hands; and Patty was quite equal to the occasion.

A tale of a headache accounted for the non-appearance of the young lady in Madam Pettigrew's apartment; and so the long hours passed by in tranquillity, until at four o'clock Beatrice awoke, with a terribly confused sense of peril, and a great dread of having overslept herself. She felt quite angered to think that she could sleep, while Charlie was still insecure; and she rose and dressed herself

as quickly as aching limbs and a dizzy head would allow.

Cold water and a new toilette refreshed her greatly; a cup of strong soup, which watchful Patty presently brought, strengthened Mistress Beatrice more and more.—Yet she looked but the shadow of the girl who came to Whiteoaks, riding on a pillion behind the old groom from Crowe Hall; and Mistress Delia gave a little cry at sight of her, when she entered the parlour in time to pour out the dish of tea for which her hostess was growing impatient.

'Why, what has happened to you, child?' Mistress Delia said, sharply. 'You leave me to myself for hours, though you know that to be alone gives me the vapours; and at last, when I am worn out with waiting for my tea, you come in, with your face the colour of skim-milk, and black rings about your eyes. What business have you with headaches, at your age?—Dear heart of mine! When I was nineteen I had heard of such things, to be sure; but as to having a headache on my own account, I would as soon have thought of wearing my grandmother's cap.'

'I have had ill news, cousin,' said Beatrice, pouring out a dish of tea, and bringing it, yellow with the richest cream, to Mistress Delia's side.

'Aye, aye,' said the elder lady, pettishly, sipping her tea with favour however; 'ill news of Sir

Raymond Forrest, I'll be bound. Either he has had his little finger broken in a Border foray, or he has seen brighter eyes than yours among the Lowland lassies; and in either case no common lamentation will serve the turn, I warrant me.—Dear, dear! there is a vast deal of folly in this world; and a girl engaged to be married has no more sense left than might creditably equip a guinea-hen.—But why do you not tell me what has happened, instead of spoiling my dish of tea with dismal looks? Is it a broken finger, or a broken troth, this time?'

'Neither, Cousin Delia,' said Beatrice, gently. 'I have heard no word from Sir Raymond Forrest since you saw him last; pray Heaven he be safe and well, and better at ease than I am!—My trouble has a different source. And, now that you are somewhat invigorated, I have a story to tell, and a petition to make. Will you hear me kindly, dear cousin?'

'Aye, child,' said Mistress Delia, with far less acerbity; for the manner of this confidence touched her.

And when Beatrice drew a low seat close to her cousin's elbow-chair, and began to tell her of Charlie, dead to his sister for years, and now near at hand yet in hourly peril, Mistress Delia yielded to the spell of the earnest eyes and voice, and understood, for the first time in her life, maybe, somewhat of the

strength of that tie between brother and sister which often withstands all parting, all separation.

Thus it came to pass that Mistress Delia Pettigrew, who was by no means a courageous or an unselfish woman, was wrought upon to perform an act which might not improbably bring with it inconvenient penalties, and which certainly exposed her to the strain of much nervous apprehension.

She empowered Beatrice to send a message to young Mr. Cope, saying that Whiteoaks, and such shelter as it could afford, were heartily at his service. And when Beatrice, in her gladness, and thankfulness, and passionate relief, covered her cousin's hands with grateful kisses, Mistress Delia, who had given but little love, and received less, during her lifetime, felt a strange thrill in her veins, a strange glow at her heart.

'There, that will do, child,' she said. 'I am a foolish woman to yield to your wishes; and your brother, I make bold to say, is a mighty unprofitable young man, for all the coil there is about him and his safety.—But as to a night's lodging and a good meal, sure no one can blame me for giving that measure of relief to a poor gentleman in distress. I ask not his politics; remember, Beatrice, I ask no questions, and I know naught.'

Beatrice was thankful and overjoyed at this happy

result of her pleading; but she knew little peace until Bill Lampeter, who, as Charlie had surmised, was found lurking in his resting-place, the barn, returned from his embassage bearing word that 'the gentleman' would follow presently.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND 'the gentleman' came, as the dusk grew deeper—somewhat hollow-eyed and gaunt from his fast and his fatigue, and with clothes much in need of brushing and drying. He had lain all day among the rushes in a marshy place too soft to bear the tread of horses' feet; and, as he lay upon his islet in the midst of the black quagmire, he had several times heard the voices of the soldiers sent to seek him.

He seemed surprised and slightly disappointed to hear that no search-party had yet explored White-oaks; and Beatrice began to regret the reprieve of which she had previously been glad.

'You see it would have been very convenient had these fellows looked in while the old lady here had a clear conscience,' said Charlie. 'Now she will let the cat out of the bag, to a dead certainty.—Well, my stay must be the shorter, Beatrice. But food, and wine, and a few hours' sleep will make a new

man of me; and I shall soon reach the main body of ours, who should be well advanced on their way into England ere now.'

'Charlie,' his sister whispered, holding his arm, 'have you heard of any disaster upon the Border?'

'No,' he said, looking at her with some surprise. 'There was a sudden change of plans, on the part of those who meant to cross, which was signalled to us at Goodrest, and caused me to linger there longer than I intended. But there was no disaster, that I know of. We suppose they had news that the soldiers from Berwick were watching the ford they meant to use, further up the Tweed.'

'Then how did Mr. Templar meet his death? The porter at Goodrest told me the soldiers cut off a party who were seeking to join the Earl of Mar from the English side; and he said that Mr. Templar and several others fell in the struggle. Oh, is it true?—is it true?'

'Why, you shake like an aspen leaf, Beatrice! 'Tis as true as most of Job Eccles' information; that is to say, the story bears some slight resemblance to the actual fact. But there was no struggle, as it happened. Poor Templar's party, finding themselves over-matched, and being very anxious to get peaceably into Scotland without waste of time or blood, made a circuit, and evaded the Hanoverian troops.

They had some rough and hasty riding, however; and Mr. Templar's horse slipped in a certain rocky descent. He was thrown, and died on the spot. His body lay a night and a day in a shepherd's hut; and then some of his following managed to convey it home to Goodrest.'

'By night?'

'By night, chiefly.—Do not look so pale upon this, Beatrice; his was a soldier's death after all, though it came at an ill moment. Could he but have seen the result of his toil!—In the triumph-hour he, and many another like him, will be missed. This will be a blow to Roger Sandiland; they were comrades before either of us were born.'

His face grew set and gloomy, as he looked into the wood-fire upon the hearth. If he read his fortune in the glowing ashes, 'twas scarce a bright one; although he spoke with a confident voice of 'the coming triumph.'

'We need that union which is strength,' he said, presently; 'and poor Templar, and one or two like him, had a glimmering notion how to promote it. The King can ill spare him; and his loss will be more felt, I fear, as time goes on.'

Beatrice did not interrupt her brother's meditations for several minutes. She stood by his side, a dainty lady in her pretty, well-finished dress, with

knots of primrose ribbon on her breast and in her hair: and she too looked into the fire, but her eyes were moist with an exceeding thankfulness.

After awhile she looked up, pressing the arm upon which her hand rested.

'Come, now,' she said. 'Cousin Delia grows impatient.'

He started, with an affectation of theatrical dismay.

'What! must I be presented to the châtelaine now, in this sorry plight?'

'You must, sir. The one misdeed which Cousin Delia cannot overlook is the want of consideration which keeps her waiting.'

'Have you no proper pride in your brother, madam? Let me but see what service a bath and a clothes'-brush can render me; and then, although every briar in my thorny refuge has taken ungenerous toll in the shape of a morsel of cloth, and my charming visnomy is embellished by scratches long and deep, while the state of my hands would somewhat discredit a ploughman, I will do my best to captivate the lady on whose good-will my safety much depends.'

But Beatrice would accept no excuses, and permit no delay. She ushered him into the parlour where Mistress Delia sat; and indeed there was no lack of

pride in her voice as she presented this worn wayfarer to her hostess.

Mistress Delia Pettigrew saw a young man who, in spite of all present disadvantages, bore a stronger resemblance to that fair Lucy Hunter of Crowe Hall who had been a contemporary of her own years ago, than his sister was ever like to do.

His hair—no longer hidden beneath the close peruke, once the distinguishing mark of a gentleman—showed the same golden-flaxen light which had been reckoned among Mistress Lucy Hunter's chief beauties. His cheeks were too thin, and his lips too firmly set, to carry out the likeness thus begun; but there was more of the Hunter than the Cope in his appearance, while in that of his sister the Cope traits predominated over the Hunter characteristics.

Yet the likeness between the two was strong and unmistakable, as they stood side by side in the firelight. And when Charlie Cope began to speak, a certain similarity of intonation and pronunciation, was very manifest. His voice was the masculine complement of Beatrice's soft full tones; when he addressed his sister and she replied, their relationship became at once evident.

Despite all fears, Madam Pettigrew began to think Charles Cope's presence in her house an agreeable incident. He knew well how to reassure her on the

score of danger; how to please by his ready courtesy and tact, and beguile the time with tales of adventure and travel, such as quiet ladies love to hear. When he returned to the parlour, refreshed by a comfortable repast, and such improvement of dress as was possible for him, Madam Pettigrew yielded herself immediately to the influence of the pleasant spell he was able to exert.

And Beatrice too, earnestly desiring that the evening should pass off well, and much relieved by the removal of some secret load from her mind, became wondrous gay and blithe, and lost her pale and weary looks. Her eyes shone like stars; her talk sparkled with pretty mirthfulness. She played upon the spinet in the corner by the oriel window, and sang to amuse her cousin and brother—glad songs, for the most part; for Mistress Beatrice Cope loved not pathetic ditties such as Anne and Bessie Hunter were wont to choose, but took to herself those which breathed of the fresh woodlands and the joy of the spring.

And so she sang the songs she liked on a dark evening in autumn, when the leaves were shivering down beneath the touch of the first sharp frost, and the icy breath of the coming winter might be felt already, lowering the pulse of life in the aged and the feeble. She sang with all her heart in the tones

of her beautiful voice, as one who snatches a happy hour, defying the coming storms of Fate.

And even while Beatrice Cope sang thus at Whiteoaks, beguiling the hours of all their dread and fear, old Madam Hunter awoke from a doze in the White Parlour at Crowe Hall, with a strange tremor and faintness at her heart. She had been failing for some days, suddenly feeling all the weight of her years; all the accumulated fatigue of the thoughts, the plans, the joys, the sorrows, which make up the burden of a long life.

Madam Hunter's life had been full of prosperity and honour; but now, in the failure of her powers, her mind reverted once more to the old sources of grief, and she thought little of the son and daughter-in-law whom she loved, and the grandchildren whom she saw around her, because her faculties were engrossed by Lucy's sorrows—Lucy, who had ceased to suffer anything on earth many years ago.

Madam Hunter sent for the Squire to her apartment; and when he came, besought and commanded him to help his sister. Lucy needed help, she said; 'twas an ill day whereupon Charles Cope crossed the threshold of Crowe Hall. And she talked wildly on, until her son succeeded in recalling the blank years to her mind—the years which had faded like a dream.

Then she shivered a little, and leant back in her easy-chair, saying that in truth 'twas very odd, but she surely fancied some great misfortune had newly come upon daughter Lucy.

And when the Squire spoke of Beatrice at White-oaks, the name seemed to stir no association of ideas. Granny did not refer to her own unwillingness to let Beatrice go there, and did not express any wish for the girl's return. But the Squire and 'young madam' said to each other that if Granny continued in this poor way, Mistress Delia Pettigrew must give up Beatrice's company in a few days' time.

All too soon the pleasant evening ended at White-oaks. Mistress Delia forgot her invalidism as well as her fears; and sat up to what was reckoned a very late and fashionable hour by Patty, Joan, and Eliza. The coming of young Mr. Cope made a wonderful stir in the household; the three hand-maidens were banded together to protect his retreat with all the weapons of female subterfuge and art.

They told amazing stories to account for the presence of a man in the house, when Jesse Ford entered the kitchen without ceremony, and surprised Joan with a pair of riding-boots, much encrusted with the black mud of a morass, in her hands. Jesse had no business to come into their kitchen without leave asked, they said to each other—for all the

world as if the place belonged to him! He took upon himself as though he were master and more; and he but an outdoor serving-man!

In fact they attacked Jesse with their nimble tongues, and showed a sudden determination to pick a quarrel with him upon any grounds, or none; and then it transpired that Joan was extending surreptitious hospitality to a stout young farmer of her acquaintance, whose horse had floundered in crossing Gunderby Moor.

Poor Joan would never have dreamt of committing such a breach of domestic trust as the harbouring of a friend 'unbeknown' to Mistress Delia; but she supported her part well, and assumed the onus of a fault she would have scorned. And Patty and Eliza backed her up, performing a very pretty little scene for Jesse Ford's benefit, and seeming to let slip by accident words which were really intentional, and devised for his special misleading.

Yet through all this Jesse, who was observant and shrewd, suspected that a different explanation than the one vouchsafed him might have more truth in it; and he pondered over his meeting with Mistress Beatrice Cope in the farm-yard at sunrise, and the condition in which he subsequently found Grizzel.

Madam Beatrice and the pony had both been

upon some night-errand, Jesse knew. And he altogether declined to believe that tale which the three maids had worked up into such a fair semblance of probability. He said nothing to them, but he thought a great deal; and the next morning at breakfast-time he contrived to cross the flower-garden wherein no business of his lay, and to take one momentary survey of the parlour as he went by the window.

'Now Heaven pity her, poor lassie!' he muttered to himself, thinking of Mistress Beatrice Cope as he trudged upon his way. 'She comes o' Jacobite kin; I doubt she's neither true nor faithful to other folk. Sir Raymond 'ull have a bonny bargain of her, I'm thinking, wi' her pliskies over hill and dale by moonlight.—But 'tis no matter for a wise man to stir in, as loves to sit quiet by his own ingle-nook. My granfer did use to say:

> "Who mells wi' what another do's
> Had best go home and shoe his goose."'

And with this sapient scrap of ancient philosophy, Jesse hushed his curiosity to rest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHARLES COPE had seen the man pass the window, and had noticed that he looked in, as of intention. He asked some question concerning this passer-by; and Beatrice, speaking the more strongly to silence her own misgivings, assured him that their secret was safe with Jesse Ford. She told her brother how Jesse had met her on her return from Goodrest, and had groomed and fed poor Grizzel. Her explanation was less satisfactory to Charlie than to herself; but he thought it best to show no doubtfulness, since information obtained from Bill Lampeter determined him to remain at Whiteoaks until dark.

Bill had crept into the house in the early dawn, to bring Mr. Cope word that the country was up, and red-coats riding hither and thither in search of a gentleman of much importance, who was known to have escaped from Goodrest with treasonable papers in his possession; wherefore 'twas only under

cover of night that the object of so much attention might hope to elude observation and pursuit.

Madam Pettigrew promised her kinsman the loan of her horse Whitestar to help him over the first dozen miles; after which Whitestar was to be left at a certain small hostelry in the hills, to be well cared for, and returned to his mistress when opportunity served.

Poor Madam Pettigrew, though she valued Whitestar, was chiefly anxious that this return should not be made too quickly, or in any compromising manner. However, Charlie's gay confident talk was by degrees producing a great effect upon her mind; and she was fast assuming the triumph of the Jacobite cause to be a foregone conclusion.

And indeed at that moment all promised fairly; though young Cope himself knew of many hidden rocks on which the party, never too united, were likely enough to split into a thousand shivers.

To have decided on a plan was a relief to Charlie and Beatrice. They had now nothing to do but to wait until the shadows lengthened, and he might with least risk pursue his journey into Scotland. When, and under what circumstances, they would meet again, they knew not; and the uncertainty and peril of their present situation gave importance to each word which passed between them.

They talked much of their parents, and of Aunt Marjorie; of that house in the City of London, too, of which Charlie's remembrance was clearer than his sister's. But of the present, and of the future, they scarcely spoke.

More than once Charlie looked at Beatrice very earnestly, and she fancied him about to speak of Sir Raymond Forrest and the proposed marriage, which she knew to be exceedingly distasteful to her brother; but each time he seemed to change his mind, and the words she dreaded to hear were not uttered. Maybe he was loth to mar the last hours they might spend together with controversy such as this.

They were sitting in the south parlour towards twelve of the clock, Beatrice engaged at her embroidery-frame in the window, and Charlie leaning back in a large chair in the more shadowy part of the room, screened by the folds of a curtain, the high carved woodwork of the spinet, and his sister's figure, from the glance of too curious eyes, when Patty Joyce bounced into the room in trepidation and haste.

'Oh, Madam Beatrice! dear heart alive!' she cried. 'Do but come to the attic window—the window of the apple-loft, madam. Heaven send my eyes may be mistaken! but I fear me their sight

is over clear and true. The soldiers are coming here, as straight as they can ride. Mr. Cope will be taken, and my poor mistress will die of fright!'

Patty was almost beside herself with terror, for which indeed she had good grounds. From the pretty attic window, half-veiled in trailing creepers, Charlie and Beatrice saw the dreaded approach. The troopers, in their red coats and buff belts, were pausing at the cross-roads, as the funeral party which bore Mr. Templar's body home had paused the evening before last. And while the brother and sister exchanged glances of mute consultation, Madam Pettigrew herself entered the apple-loft, having climbed the stairs quite actively, all her illness forgotten in the overwhelming consciousness of grave peril.

Charles Cope was calm, alert, and ready; but his knowledge of the house and grounds of Whiteoaks was not great. Prudence had kept him from exploration during the hours he had spent there, since chance encounters such as Jesse Ford had succeeded in compassing were not to be risked.

'Shall I make a dash for the meadows?' he said in a low tone to Beatrice.

'No, no!' she whispered. 'We are not sure of the man Ford. If he has betrayed us——'

'The earths will be stopped. I see,' the young

man replied. 'To leave the house will but precipitate catastrophe. Is there no cellar?—no secret chamber?—no disused chimney?—wherein one might have a chance to lie hid?—Cousin Delia, I am grieved beyond measure to have brought this discomfiture upon you. I know not whether an honourable surrender were not best.'

But Mistress Delia Pettigrew had risen above herself at this moment of crisis.

'No, kinsman,' she said, firmly. 'Such protection as Whiteoaks can give to a gentleman in distress shall not be wanting. If they find you, and take you, the will of Heaven be done!—but we will do our part. It shall never be said that Delia Pettigrew delivered up a fugitive into the hand of the enemy. —Patty, quick, girl, for your life! You know the house from attic to cellar. What can we do? Where can we conceal Mr. Cope?'

Patty Joyce wrung her hands, and wept. Each place she suggested seemed more hopeless than the last. When she proposed the great copper in the wash-house, Charlie Cope shook his head, and laughed.

'You are at the end of your resources, Patty, my girl,' he said. 'This will be no careless search.—Could we but manage something of a disguise!'

His eyes wandered to Madam Pettigrew's lofty

headgear and imposing hoop, and then sought Beatrice's face once more.

'Could I personate my cousin's anxious sister, come to be with her in her sickness?' he said.

But across the mind of Mistress Beatrice Cope a brave inspiration had flashed; and, although her face was pale, her eyes were shining with renewed hope.

'Brother!' she cried, 'I have it!—Do but trust me, and I will manage this matter. Come quickly —quickly!—down to the south parlour again.'

'She is crazy; that child is crazy!' said poor Mistress Delia. 'The south parlour, forsooth? why, that is in the very fore-front of the peril.'

'Nevertheless, therein shall be our security,' said Beatrice; and, seeing her strangely urgent and eager, her brother and cousin gave way to her.

Five minutes later all was perfectly quiet at Whiteoaks. Joan was making an apple-tart in the kitchen; Patty was rolling up butter in the dairy; Eliza was gathering savoury herbs in the garden near the back door. And Madam Pettigrew sat in her easy-chair in the south parlour, with her knitting-work in hand, and the latest news-letter upon a little stand at her elbow; while Mistress Beatrice Cope was seated on the music-stool before the spinet, whiling marvellous sweet music from the worn heart

of that ancient instrument. The spinet stood a little space from the wall, at right angles with one of the windows, so that the face of the musician was towards the centre of the room.

Mistress Beatrice wore a flowing sacque of primrose silk, the train depending from her shoulders as the manner of the time was; and the shining folds of her drapery filled the dusky corner with light. She looked wondrous fair and gracious as she sat there in her place, a soft pink colour in her cheeks, and carolling as gaily as any bird.

Mistress Beatrice, as it chanced, was singing thus when Eliza, reasonably flustered, but not over-much alarmed, appeared at the door of the south parlour bearing a message from one 'Colonel Willoughby.'

Colonel Willoughby begged to present his respectful compliments to Mistress Delia Pettigrew; and, although loth to intrude upon her, requested the honour of a brief interview, on business of importance.

Mistress Delia shrank and demurred a little, sent her compliments to Colonel Willoughby, and regretted that the feeble state of her health prohibited her from receiving any visitors. Would he be good enough to communicate with her through her servant?

Upon this the Colonel made known the fact that he was under orders to search Whiteoaks, and to attach the person of a certain political offender who was believed to be in hiding on the premises. He was very courteous—very anxious to declare that he knew such concealment would be perpetrated without connivance on the part of Madam Pettigrew; and Mistress Delia judged it discreet to accede to his reiterated request to see her, which, indeed, she could not well decline to grant. The Colonel, it appeared, must enter each room at Whiteoaks ere his duty would be done.

Colonel Willoughby stepped into the south parlour, a grave man with gray eyebrows, a weather-beaten face, and upright military carriage. He bowed profoundly to Mistress Delia, and also to the young lady at the spinet, who acknowledged his courtesy by a very graceful inclination of her head.

The interior of the apartment impressed the Colonel favourably; these two ladies, seated each at her occupations, looked very unlikely to be engaged in treasonable practices. He hastened to explain that he had no wish to annoy Madam Pettigrew in her own house; that a disagreeable charge was laid upon him, from which he would gladly be free. But madam had doubtless heard that warrants were out for the arrest of a person specially obnoxious to

Government, who had made his escape from Goodrest with much daring and audacity.

'Indeed, sir, I heard not of it,' said Mistress Delia. 'Or, if I heard, I marked not. I stir little abroad; the news of the country-side is slow in reaching me. The gentleman of whom you speak escaped from justice, did he?—Well, well! These disturbing times are ill for ladies who live in lonely granges. Pray Heaven he be not lurking about these premises of mine!'

'Reassure yourself, madam,' Colonel Willoughby said. 'In that case, I doubt not, we will presently find him.'

'You will examine more especially the cellars of the house, sir? Whiteoaks has very singular large cellars, in which many men might be hid; the thought whereof,' said Mistress Delia, shuddering, 'will cost me many a wakeful night.'

Colonel Willoughby repeated the cheering assurance that the fugitive, were he in or near the house of Whiteoaks, could by no means escape discovery and arrest.

'He broke away from Goodrest,' the Colonel said, 'but that was under cover of night, and the watch was ill kept. The fellows were posted singly; whereby one was overpowered, and met his death. My measures, madam, are somewhat different. Not

a mouse could slip out from this your house of Whiteoaks unobserved by my men; wherefore your mind may be at rest and easy.—Have you had any addition to your ordinary household, of late?'

The question was asked with an abrupt bluntness somewhat at variance with the Colonel's previous address; and Mistress Delia, not a little startled, answered with more regard to expediency than truth.

'The young lady whom you now see has been my guest this sen'night past,' she said. 'My kind kinsman, Squire Hunter of Crowe Hall, spares one of his daughters to cheer my loneliness from time to time. Otherwise I have been alone, sir, and have seen little of my friends. When one is sick and sorry, one's acquaintance are apt to fall away.'

Colonel Willoughby was quick to note the reference to Squire Hunter of Crowe Hall, a gentleman known to be excellently well affected to the established government; and, as he bowed a second time to the lady at the spinet, he thought that the Squire was to be congratulated upon the possession of a very charming daughter.

He presently withdrew from the south parlour, to superintend the search through the house and grounds of Whiteoaks; and as he left the room, the supposed daughter of Squire Hunter began to touch

the keys again, playing little careless snatches of one tune after another, softly at first, and then with more vigour. She was not nervous or alarmed, as poor Mistress Delia Pettigrew seemed to be. Doubtless she knew 'twas highly improbable that a Jacobite traitor should seek refuge in that house.

Colonel Willoughby could hear her begin to sing, as he and his men went up-stairs; and her voice—one of no common beauty—was exquisitely true and steady. The Colonel was somewhat of a connoisseur in music; and, although he had an important task to attend to, he could not help noticing and enjoying the perfection of this untaught melody.

Squire Hunter's daughter played and sang chiefly by ear—that was evident; and her ballad-music was simple; but the ear was very correct, and the quality of the voice like the notes of a nightingale for richness and sweetness.

'Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft,
To give my Love good-morrow!'

'Have you examined that deep chimney well, Hughes? Take the lantern, and thrust it as far up the aperture as you can.'

'Wings from the wind to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow;

Bird prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
To give my Love good-morrow;
To give my Love good-morrow,
Notes from them both I'll borrow.'

'Be heedful, corporal; is not that a small door, yonder?—only a panel, do you say?—Try, then, whether it be movable. Press hard; do not spare for forcible knocking.'

'Wake from thy nest, Robin red-breast,
Sing birds in every furrow;
And from each hill, let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow!'

'Look well among the rafters of this loft, my men; a velvet coat and lace ruffles have taken refuge amid dust and cobwebs ere now.—What, no sign of him we seek? Our search has been thorough, I think.'

'Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow!
You pretty elves, amongst yourselves
Sing my fair Love good-morrow!
To give my Love good-morrow,
Sing birds in every furrow!'

The voice went pealing on, joyous and sweet; evidently Squire Hunter's daughter wished to beguile her kinswoman from nervous thoughts which the presence of an armed sentry at the parlour-door, and a search-party within and without the house, might not unnaturally induce. . . . Yet the time seemed

very long ere Colonel Willoughby returned to the south parlour with a shade of disappointment on his brow.

He looked round the room with the searching glance of one quick to detect any deception; but the parlour seemed to present no means of concealment whatever. The walls were painted with wreaths of flowers and fruit; the hangings were extremely scanty; and no half-shadowed door or dubious recess rewarded the Colonel's scrutiny.

He stood upon the hearthrug a full minute, watchfully regarding the quiet scene; turning his eyes from the plain middle-aged lady in her towering cap, who was full of trepidation and excitement, to the graceful girl at the spinet, who was perfectly composed and tranquil. She had ceased to play as he entered the room; but her fingers still hovered lightly over the keys of the instrument.

Colonel Willoughby presently approached her, saying very courteously,

'You make sweet music, madam.'

She answered him with bright readiness, yet with a touch of stateliness which sat well upon her.

The gray Colonel was much captivated; assuredly, Squire Hunter of Crowe Hall had a very charming daughter!

He asked some question concerning a song, the

echoes of which had reached him, he said, like fairy-music. And Beatrice sang the song again, with its warbling accompaniment of bird-notes, its exquisite ripple of careless gladness.—She sang, concentrating the attention of the officer upon herself by a strong exertion of her will and her youthful charm; and the Colonel stood at a few paces from her side, while only the graceful abundant folds of her flowing sacque concealed the form of the man on whose head there was a price.—She sang; and her voice did not tremble or fail. But that joyous music was the last which ever crossed the lips of Mistress Beatrice Cope.

The Colonel thanked her when the song was ended. He had never, he said, heard the spirit of a ballad so perfectly given; Mistress Hunter had the art of gathering a whole choir of birds to make gay melody around her.

With this pretty speech he took his leave, assuring Madam Pettigrew that the mischievous traitor whom he sought was certain of speedy arrest wherever he might have taken refuge.

'For he is a well-known man,' the Colonel said. 'He was some time in London, under the name of Lester Blundell; at which period he did infinite harm in detaching men from their allegiance to the Protestant succession. He cannot long escape capture, wherever he may lurk.'

Even Mistress Delia's tongue was then unequal to perform its office. She could but offer the Colonel hospitality for himself and his men; which he as briefly declined, saying that his orders demanded speedy execution. He made his compliments to the ladies, and withdrew.

Almost immediately they heard a bugle-call—a mustering of the troop before the door—and then the swift long trot of the cavalry horses, as Colonel Willoughby and his men rode away upon their fruitless quest.

And Mistress Beatrice Cope sat still before the spinet which had done such matchless service. Her colour had faded from cheek and lips; and she sat like a marble image of S. Cecilia, beautiful and pale. Her hands rested upon the keys; she seemed as one spell-bound.

When her brother rose from his concealment, and put his arms about her, she shivered exceedingly; but no words came from the still-parted lips whence the blithe song had late'y floated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

COLONEL WILLOUGHBY rode away from Whiteoaks sorely mortified and disappointed.

At this time contradictory rumours were constantly afloat; and just then men confidently believed 'The Chevalier' to be already in England. As a matter of fact, he was still in France; but the cavalry officers at Berwick had received what they esteemed trustworthy information to the effect that he was roving from house to house among his Northumbrian adherents, waiting until the army under the command of the Earl of Mar should cross the Border and begin a march towards London. This seemed highly probable; and 'twas further asserted that James was identical with a certain young gentleman passing under the name of Lester Blundell, who appeared in London during the last year of Queen Anne's life, and was very busy among the Jacobite gentry, also enticing over to the Stuart interest many waverers whose wish for a Hanoverian sovereign was lukewarm.

Colonel Willoughby had set his mind upon being the fortunate means of bringing about this most important arrest. He knew that the man whom he sought could not have put any great distance between himself and Goodrest as yet; but no clue could be gained from any one as to the direction of the flight, which had been begun almost by night, and through a desolate country.

Jesse Ford was guiltless of calling attention towards Whiteoaks, although Charlie and Beatrice doubted him. He had 'kept a still tongue,' as he promised; but a vast deal of conjecture and cogitation went on in Jesse's brain when he saw the advent of the soldiers. He was much puzzled, too, when they went away without their prey. For Jesse knew quite well that 'the gentleman' was somewhere within that house of Whiteoaks.

The gray-browed Colonel, with his astute face and cold watchful eye, searched the country-side from end to end, hunting the Jacobite gentleman from Goodrest as one of old was hunted 'like a partridge on the mountains.' His men investigated the wildest recesses of that wild hill-country which lies between Goodrest and the Scottish Border; and they tried the faith of many a woodland ranger and moorland shepherd.

Charles Cope had very strange escapes; his good

fortune, and the faithfulness of those among whom he passed, seemed even to himself almost incredible. The distance he had to traverse was short, but the dangers and hindrances with which it was beset were enormous.

After infinite fatigue and hardship he found himself in Scotland, with the money and papers, so important to the advancing army, safe and intact.—And then, just when the fugitive was in comparative safety, Jesse Ford began to think that he might as well make use of knowledge which could harm no one very grievously and might bring to its owner a certain reward.

A large sum of money had been offered for information likely to facilitate the arrest of the very gentleman whom Jesse had seen breakfasting in the south parlour at Whiteoaks; and Jesse, going to the market-town one day, heard the proclamation read from the Cross, and recognized the description of the person beyond a doubt.

Jesse did not suppose that the whole of the Government reward would be given to one who should but declare the manner of this gentleman's escape; yet he thought that the officer in command at Berwick would probably be willing to pay well for the resolving of doubt as to the proceedings of a fugitive so important.

The affair at Whiteoaks being past and over, and the gentleman gone no one knew whither, it did not occur to Jesse's not very brilliant wits to imagine that anybody there would suffer materially by his disclosures. Government would scarce deal hardly with Madam Pettigrew for having acted upon an impulse of pity such as women are apt to feel. And as to Mistress Beatrice Cope, the young lady who visited Madam Pettigrew, and at whose instance and entreaties the gentleman had been harboured, her case was certain to be gently considered.

Jesse Ford, therefore, prosecuted a few inquiries without more scruple of conscience than he found himself able easily to subdue. He was not very friendly with Joan and Patty, the two elder maidens of Madam Pettigrew's establishment; but he had had a little flirtation with Eliza, who was a village beauty to whom no man's homage came amiss.

Eliza had no idea of throwing herself and her attractions away upon Jesse Ford; yet when evenings were dull at Whiteoaks, and Madam Pettigrew's household rule prevented any possibility of livelier society, Eliza was glad to make an errand into the farm-yard to feed the poultry, and chat a little with Jesse as he leant meditative upon the gate.

She did so a couple of evenings after the escape of Charles Cope; and Jesse opened the conversation

by asking after the health of Madam Beatrice, who had not been about the fields and grounds the last day or two, he said.

Eliza was a kind-hearted girl, albeit a somewhat giddy one; and she seemed much concerned about the young lady. She lowered her own tones to a whisper as she told Jesse Ford that Mistress Beatrice had lost her voice—clean and entirely lost it: and such a beautiful voice as she had, to be sure! Just to hear her sing about the house, when she first came to Whiteoaks!—a person could scarce believe any sound could be so sweet. And now she looked like a ghost; and 'twas all she could do to speak two words, in a strained whisper. When she moved her lips, there was no sound.

'Why, that's come on very sudden,' said Jesse, slowly. 'She were singing like a bird the arternoon the soldiers was here.'

'She haven't spoke a word since, but in a whisper,' said Eliza. 'And madam have given her black-currant tea to drink; and Patty have rubbed her throat till the white skin is red and raw; and Joan have made her a plaster of stinging nettles for to keep up the irritation. And they give her cream fresh from the dairy; and a raw egg now and again —though to be sure poor Madam Beatrice can't abide they raw eggs. But 'tis all no manner o'

use. Her voice is gone: I doubt it'll ne'er come back.'

'She must ha' had a terrible fright wi' the soldiers coming arter the young gentleman as were here,' said Jesse.

'What dost know about the young gentleman, then?' Eliza asked, sharply. 'There weren't no young gentleman here; only Joan's bachelor, as foundered his horse a-crossing——'

'Joan's bachelor,' said Jesse, in his slow way, ''ud scarce be having breakfast i' the parlour, along with madam and the young mistress, I'm thinking. —I saw the gentleman, Eliza, my lass; I know'd all as were going on: and I could ha' done a sight o' harm if I'd a been that ways minded. But Jesse Ford weren't never one to make mischief with his tongue.'

Eliza, with many exclamations of dismay, dropped the crusts she held in her apron; and the poultry flew upon the spoil, pecking and clucking, and making as much noise as Eliza herself.

'Now, where's the sense o' raising such a din?' said Jesse. 'I tell 'ee I weren't one to make mischief; though there's them as might ha' trusted me more. I know'd that the young gentleman were here a night and a day; and I know'd that Madam Beatrice were out the night afore, and that Grizzel,

poor beastie, were hard-travelled. But I said nought to the officer; no, not I.—One o' the troop spoke to I, though. He said they were seeking one as is a very firebrand i' the land; and there was a grit reward to win, he said. But I kept a still tongue in my head.'

'Blessings on 'ee, Jesse, for that same!' said poor Eliza, beginning to sob. 'Oh, such a day as we had! I'll ne'er forget it, if I live to be as old as Granny Hackett down to Whitecross.'

'And who was the gentleman with his neck in peril?' asked Jesse.

'Well, Patty did say he were Madam Beatrice's brother, as she'd scarce seen ever afore,' whispered Eliza, wiping her eyes; 'but I dunnot think so, myself. I think he were her true love, Jesse, else she'd never have dared so much for him.—And yet 'tis odd, too; he bain't nigh upon so personable a man as Sir Raymond Forrest. But there! looks isn't everything,' said Eliza, resuming her little tone of rustic coquetry; 'and the gentleman has a beguiling tongue. I could ha' done a'most anything for him, myself, after he once spoke to me so smiling and pleasant, and him in peril o' his life every minute!'

And Eliza glanced mischievously at Jesse, to see how he liked this remark. But Jesse's attention

was engrossed, and he did not respond to the challenge thus conveyed.

'What did she dare for him?' he said.

'And that,' said Eliza, somewhat tartly, 'is just what I have no mind to tell you, Jesse. There's other folk can keep a still tongue, as well as yourself, I'm thinking.'

Jesse saw that he must go to work in a different way. He devoted his energies to courtship rather than cross-examination; and Eliza, as soon as she imagined her fascinations to be the prominent object in his mind, was easily thrown off her guard.

When he by degrees worked round to Madam Beatrice and the young gentleman once more, Eliza was disposed to be more communicative and less cautious.

'What did she dare for him?' Eliza repeated, when Jesse's blandishments had brought her gradually back to the point. 'Is that what you want to know, Jesse?—Why, she rode through the dark night to warn him to flee from Goodrest; and if you call *that* a trifle for a woman to do, you've a queer turn o' mind, that's all I can say. Through they lonesome lanes, and past the fields where the Good People dance;—many a time I've seen the rings upon the grass down by the river.'

'I know she warned him,' said Jesse. 'I reckon

she did more nor that, arterwards. She must ha' thought upon some cunning hiding-place, when the soldiers came. For he was here then; there's no manner o' doubt o' that.'

'Eh, but Madam Beatrice is clever and brave!' Eliza exclaimed, divided between the desire to electrify Jesse with a startling story, and some lingering remnants of prudence which made her feel that she had better keep silence on the subject. 'Jesse! If I tell 'ee what she did, thee'lt say naught of it?'

'Nay, nay,' said Jesse. 'What for should I? And besides 'tis all past and done now.—But I should like fine to know how Madam Beatrice managed,' he said, reflectively. 'I couldn't ha' believed there was a mouse-hole i' the house or near it, that they red-coats didn't glower into.'

'And no more there wasn't,' she said. 'They crope, and they crawled, and they clomb,—eh, dear! they was hot and dusty ere they'd done; and the Colonel—him with the loud voice—a-cheering of 'em on to force theirselves into every corner, and take their chance o' getting out again. One of 'em, a stout fellow wi' a mighty red face, stuck fast i' the chimbley of the old justice-room, as is never used now-a-days. The Colonel hounded him up; he said as how there might be a secret chamber, aside from the smoke-drift. And the poor fellow clambered as

high as he could, and then stuck where the chimbley narrowed; and they dragged him down by his boots, which was all you could see of him, waggling about as he struggled and fought. He were a'most smothered with the soot and the pother; but the Colonel thought nowt on't.—And all the while the young gentleman were quiet i' the south parlour, with Madam and Mistress Beatrice!'

'Ha!' quoth Jesse, much interested.

'Aye; in the south parlour. Madam Beatrice sat at the spinet—do 'ee know how the spinet stands?'

Jesse nodded.

'In the corner, betwixt Mistress Beatrice and the wall, the gentleman were hid. She threw the train o' her gown over him: oh, Patty says 'twas pretty to hear her begging him to crouch down there and be still! And she made Patty help to arrange the folds, because madam were all in a tremble. So Patty set the dress as natural as could be; and what with the train, and the carving of the spinet, and the darkness of the corner by the wall, nought could be seen of the gentleman, unless Mistress Beatrice moved. . . . And she was beautiful to see, Patty says, sitting there for all the world as blithe as if she never knew a care. She was singing when the soldiers rode up to the door; and she sang again while they searched the

house, for she thought no one would believe she had any hand in hiding him whom they sought, while she had heart and voice to sing so true and steady. —But when the Colonel came near the spinet arterwards she must have been frighted terrible. Yet madam says she were just herself even then, and smiled, and answered him so as he should suspect nothing. And when he paid her compliments upon the song he had heard in the distance, she sang it for him as he stood there in the south parlour. . . . Oh, 'twas awesome to hear her, singing so joyously, while her poor heart must have been fit to break with the fear and the dread!—And the poor gentleman, all the while, close at her feet beneath the primrose silk of her sacque!—And that is how she lost her voice, Jesse Ford. For when the search-party went away, and all the peril was over, her beautiful voice that was so sweet and so gay was gone too; and a weak little whisper has been all the sound she can utter ever since. 'Twas her voice for his life, I reckon.—And doubtless she was willing to pay the price.'

'Aye, aye,' said Jesse Ford, slowly nodding his head. ''Twas well and bravely done, Eliza, my woman.—And being done as 'tis, and all successfully ended, it matters not who knows how Madam Beatrice saved the young gentleman's life.—Eliza! Do 'ee

mind the cottage wi' the apricock-tree trained o'er its walls, down by Whitecross Mill?'

'Aye,' said Eliza.

'I do mean to rent that 'ere cottage, or maybe to buy it out of hand, come Christmas,' said Jesse. 'And I shall plant and sow the garden-grund, and keep pigs, and fowls, and happen a cow likewise.'

'Have 'ee saved enough for that, then?' asked the village beauty, twisting her fingers in her apron, and contemplating Jesse from quite a new point of view.

She was not sure that she should choose to marry him; but it now appeared that he was 'eligible,' according to the Whitecross standard of opinion, if at any time she did so choose.

'I've a-saved more nor you think for,' said Jesse. 'But you've know'd me ever for a careful man, haven't 'ee?—And 'tis wonderful what a careful man can scrape together, so 'tis.'

CHAPTER XXX.

AT this moment Patty looked out from the back door to summon Eliza; and Jesse had no chance to enlarge further upon his own merits, and the substantial advantages which 'a careful man' could bestow upon his bride.

Eliza darted into the house, and Jesse Ford trudged away to the village with his mind made up. The next day, Madam Pettigrew paid his wages; and Jesse availed himself of the opportunity to ask for a holiday. And very early in the morning, before the sun was up, he set off upon his road to Berwick.

Arrived at Berwick, Jesse inquired for Colonel Willoughby's quarters; but although these were easily found, the Colonel himself was absent.

A hint on Jesse's part that he had important tidings to communicate made the soldiers to whom he spoke very willing to present him to the officer commanding in the Colonel's absence; and Jesse

soon found himself in a well-furnished room, awaiting the coming of this gentleman. There was wine upon the table, and also the remains of a late and substantial breakfast; and the party who had partaken of this refreshment were now playing tennis hard by.

Jesse Ford heard the noise of the tennis balls, the loud voices, and the laughter, as he waited for the entrance of the officer who would receive his communication.

Presently a gentleman aged about seven-and-twenty, wearing a small peruke of a warm brown colour, and very exquisite fine lace at his cravat, entered the room. He had not been playing in the match at tennis, but merely looking on, and sharing in the merriment. A pleasant smile still hovered upon his lips; the flavour of some merry jest still lingered in his brain.

Jesse Ford thought that he had seen that countenance before; but he was somewhat confused by the novelty of his circumstances, and could not be sure.

'I come, your honour,' he said, making his best bow, and speaking in the slow, sententious way natural to him, 'along of that there exclamation.'

'Oh!—ah!—yes, to be sure; the proclamation,' said the young officer. 'Well, my man, out with your news; open your budget. Tell us where this

troubler of the peace at present lurks: and your fortune will be made, you know.'

He spoke these words as in duty bound; but he looked with scant favour upon the man to whom they were addressed, wishing very earnestly that Colonel Willoughby were in Berwick that day.

''Tis beyond my power to say where he do lurk, your honour,' said Jesse Ford, in reply to the question put, 'seeing that I knows naught of the gentleman since he made good his escape. But I thought maybe the Colonel 'ud like to know how he were hid at Whiteoaks——'

'At Whiteoaks?—This man to whom the proclamation refers escaped from Goodrest, or was cunningly hidden there,' the young officer said, speaking sharply and decidedly.

'Aye, sir; but he went from Goodrest to Whiteoaks, Madam Pettigrew's place; and he were hid i' the house a night and a day,' Jesse answered. 'I can tell 'ee how 'twas managed, from first to last.'

'Do so, then, at your best pace,' said the other, impatiently.

'But about the reward, your honour?'

'Oh, as to that, you will have what your information earns; it may be worth nothing,' Sir Raymond Forrest replied, with a contemptuous bitterness past concealment.

When the proclamation was issued by the Government under which he served, he had not in his own mind associated it with the brother of Mistress Beatrice Cope; since the hero of the Goodrest escape was imagined to be no private gentleman, but one upon whose safety the whole fortunes of the Jacobite party hinged. And now 'twas a strange turn of Fate which made Sir Raymond the recipient of information which touched him nearly; and in his first agitation he could not disguise the disgust and repulsion with which he regarded the bearer of it.

In a moment, however, he perceived that Jesse would not speak without more encouragement than he had given; and he also realized the importance of hearing the account, and satisfying the man's avarice. Else who could say into whose ear Jesse Ford might pour a story in which the name of Mistress Beatrice Cope must perforce be mentioned?

'I do not suppose that your information can be worth much, my man,' he said, 'since it touches not upon the present whereabouts of this proscribed person. But I wish to hear the tale, and I will reward you well for the recital.—You say, then, that the fugitive was within the four walls of Whiteoaks when Colonel Willoughby and his men called there?'

Jesse Ford told his story much as Eliza had told

it to him, proceeding with more confidence as he noticed that his auditor was greatly interested. To judge by the interest aroused, the guineas produced should be many, Jesse thought.

When he came to describe the manner in which Colonel Willoughby's search had been baffled, the young officer whom he addressed rose from his seat hastily, and began to pace the room from end to end.

'Go on,' he said, whenever Jesse paused in his recital; and the man knew that he listened with breathless attention, although his footsteps never ceased until the tale was done. Then he stood by one of the windows, saying, still with averted face,

'Under what name did this gentleman pass at Whiteoaks?'

'No one knows the young gentleman's name, your honour,' said Jesse. 'He passed i' the house as the brother of Madam Beatrice Cope; but 'twas believed among the women that he were her true-love, as do seem more likely. And I be o' that way o' thinking, myself. In fact,' said Jesse, with an air of profound consideration, 'I haven't no manner o' dubitation on the point.'

Sir Raymond Forrest seated himself at a side-table, drawing towards him a heavy standish of ink, as though he intended to take minutes of what had

been said. But in an instant he started up, looking wondrous dark and pale.

'Go, sir,' he said, frowning upon the dismayed serving-man with a heavy brow before which Jesse cowered. 'You have wrought harm enough this day. Return whence you came, and think and speak no more of these matters, lest worse befall you. Know you the penalty for misprision of treason?'

Jesse's jaw fell, and his eyes opened wide. The words he heard sounded ominous; he began to think that he had best have 'kept a still tongue.'

'You say you knew that this unfortunate gentleman was harboured at Whiteoaks, although you knew not the manner of the concealment until after his escape,' Sir Raymond pursued, cold, calm, and relentless. 'Now your present position, my good lad, appears to me extremely awkward and perilous. 'Tis well that you laid this information before me, since I am by no means inclined to earn credit for zeal in His Majesty's service by harassing two ladies, who doubtless,' (here he cleared his voice, speaking with some slight difficulty) 'doubtless, I say, acted from motives which do them honour. But, were you to breathe a word of this to any other officer, you would expose yourself and them to the penalties of the law. Therefore, you will do wisely to speak no more of what chanced at Whiteoaks, until your dying day;

else may you chance to make acquaintance with the inside of Newcastle Jail.'

'Eh, sir, I bain't one to make mischief,' said Jesse, much crestfallen and dispirited. 'But hearing o' that grit reward as were offered, it seemed a pity, sir, that so much good money should be wasted-like. If I'd a thought as Madam Pettigrew, and the young lady, and I myself to boot o' that, 'ud run a chance o' Newcastle Jail, wild horses shouldn't ha' dragged a word o' this story from Jesse Ford's tongue. I bain't like they women-folk, allays a-clattering whether or no; I can keep a still tongue when I do please.'

'Let me recommend you so to please, in future,' Sir Raymond Forrest said, very curtly; and then he pushed sundry gold pieces across the table towards Jesse, without looking at him.

'Take your reward,' he said. 'I pay you, not for information which may be used, but for a tale I chose to hear. And now, begone. Remember what I have said.'

Jesse, bewildered and terrified, gathered up the money and went, trembling lest each soldier whom he passed should question or arrest him.

He was no sooner out of Berwick, than he took to his heels and ran. Those few guineas which he carried home were the hardest earned of any he had

ever possessed; for he purchased them with peace of mind, as well as bodily exercise. The words 'misprision of treason' and 'Newcastle Jail' had a very ugly sound in Jesse Ford's ears.

Sir Raymond Forrest, meanwhile, sat alone in his quarters in much bitterness of soul. He felt no scruple as to keeping his own counsel concerning the proceedings of the ladies at Whiteoaks; but he could not avoid dwelling upon the thought that this gentleman whom they sheltered was firmly believed to be identical with 'The Pretender.' True, a mistake on this point was possible; yet probabilities were strongly in favour of the surmise. It seemed unlikely that the Chevalier should remain in France so long after the enterprise of his adherents had been begun; and yet 'twas absolutely certain that he was not with them in Scotland.

A horrible doubt entered into the mind of Sir Raymond Forrest. Beatrice, he remembered, had not absolutely said that her brother lived; she had but left her lover to draw that inference from her words, when they spoke together at Whiteoaks. . . .

A species of madness held possession of Sir Raymond, as he thought upon this; he scarce knew what he imagined or believed. He did not try to reason as to Beatrice's truth or falsehood; he only knew that if 'twas the Chevalier whom she shielded,

and to whose service she had bound herself, then he himself was indeed a man undone—a man robbed, spoiled, and desolate.

'Twas a curious state of mind in which, without consciously judging her, he yet condemned her, unheard, untried; in which his spirit shuddered away from the recollection of the sweet and gracious lady whom he loved, and from the contemplation of that part of her life in which he seemed to have no share.

But at sundown of that same day Sir Raymond's perplexed thoughts were turned into a different channel by the arrival of a messenger from Crowe Hall, who came bearing very evil tidings.

Mistress Beatrice Cope, it appeared, had returned home from Whiteoaks the day before, in a state which greatly alarmed 'young Madam' and the family. She was evidently in the last stage of exhaustion, and could scarce speak a word so as to be heard. And almost ever since she arrived, she had been asleep; lying in a deep trance-like slumber from which 'twas well-nigh impossible to rouse her. And her pulse being very low and faint, they greatly feared that in this long sleep her life would ebb away.

Therefore Squire Hunter had despatched a messenger to Berwick, to notify to his nephew, Sir Raymond Forrest, the alarming illness of Mistress

Beatrice Cope; and Sir Raymond Forrest, in his consternation, forgot the previous tenor of his thoughts, and did but consider that should Beatrice pass hence, all the gladness and rejoicing would pass with her, leaving this present world dark and desolate.

And he could not refrain from thinking upon her sweetness then, and upon the earnest fervour with which she had professed to him that he held her heart in truth and verity.

'Twas impossible to obtain release from duty until the return of his Colonel; and well-nigh four-and-twenty hours had been lost when Sir Raymond rode at last across the park of Crowe Hall.

As he slackened his horse's speed at the first rising ground whence a view of the house could be obtained, a mist gathered before his sight and the bright autumnal tints dazzled him. He could see nothing distinctly; yet he felt rather than saw that the house looked very white and blank in the crimson glow of the setting sun. He rode into the courtyard, with a dull hopeless desolation weighing down his spirits, and asked no question of the man who took his horse. But the groom spoke, pointing up at the closed windows.

'Old Madam Hunter died this morning, your honour,' he said, in a low tone. 'She have been

failing this sennight past; but 'twas sudden at the last. The Squire and young Madam are sore cast down.'

These words restored to Sir Raymond the use of his brain and of his tongue. His sight cleared; his voice, though husky and broken, was articulate and firm.

When Anne Hunter met him a moment later, with tender pity in her sorrowful face, he could ask after *her*—after Mistress Beatrice Cope.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AND then, almost immediately, young Madam Hunter, pale and tearful from recent grief and present anxiety, took Sir Raymond into the fresh and pleasant chamber where Beatrice lay sleeping that strange sleep which nobody at Crowe Hall could understand.

Bessie Hunter sat by the bedside, holding one wan little hand in hers. The face and lips of the sleeper were blanched almost to the whiteness of death; but the countenance wore the peaceful, even happy expression which comes from rest after labour and toil.

When Bessie relinquished the hand she held, and Raymond Forrest, falling on his knees, pressed his lips upon it, Mistress Beatrice Cope, for the first time during many hours, moved a little, and half opened her eyes. Their quiet glance met his agonized appealing gaze; and she recognized him at once,

making a great though momentary effort to rouse herself and speak.

'Raymond!' she whispered, a sweet and wistful smile of intense gladness lighting up her gray eyes and her colourless face; 'he is safe—Oh, thank God! —my brother . . .!'

And with these words, audible only to him to whom they were addressed, she sank once more into that mysterious world of sleep, which is sometimes only the border-land across which wayfarers pass to the still more mysterious Kingdom of the Dead.

Her time was not yet come, however; many years of life, with its pains and pleasures, lay before Mistress Beatrice Cope. She recovered slowly from the illness in which her great exhaustion culminated; but she had no after-memory of that moment in which Sir Raymond Forrest knelt beside her bed, and her half-conscious lips spoke words which were to him as the resolving of all doubt. She never knew that she had spoken of her brother.

The ill-fated rising of 1715 came to its sad conclusion very speedily.

Charles Cope fought with conspicuous gallantry upon the woeful field of Sheriffmuir, and was one of the last of the adherents of the Chevalier who quitted Great Britain when all was subsequently

known to be lost. But he and his sister did not meet again, after that memorable day on which she saved his life in Madam Pettigrew's parlour at Whiteoaks.

Beatrice found means to send him a small miniature of herself, which had been very delicately executed by an artist in Newcastle a year before; and from this miniature her brother had the picture painted which is now to be seen at Goodrest.

'Twas a fancy-portrait in part, without doubt, being painted in France, and chiefly from Mr. Cope's description of his sister; but the likeness was reckoned wonderfully true and accurate. And he had her maiden name cut deep upon the frame; since to him she was ever 'Beatrice Cope.'

The portrait has its place in the Goodrest gallery, where it still stands, a memorial of a brave lady who had a loving and a constant heart.

And 'tis satisfactory to think that the stormy experiences of those sad and dangerous days did not make lasting shipwreck of the fortunes of one so true and faithful. 'Tis said, indeed, that Dame Alicia Forrest was never over-well reconciled to the marriage which she disliked, and which she had done all in her power to break off; but she dwelt chiefly with her daughter Ermine, who had married much to her satisfaction; and was little at Drumscour

after the wedding betwixt her son and Mistress Beatrice Cope took place.

And Beatrice Forrest was a very happy wife; although the beautiful voice which had been her maiden-dower returned no more in its fulness and melody, and her eyes had at times the strained yet wistful expression which lingers in those of a woman who has resolutely forced herself to a terrible endurance.

Three faces faded out of her life never to return. The brother to whom her heart was strongly drawn —the gentle devout woman to whom her early friendship was given—the elder friend whose claim upon her took root in her childish memories and in her father's grave—all these crossed the seas, and breathed English air no more.

And Mistress Beatrice Cope was not among the number of those who forget. But she was singularly free from personal troubles of her own, being greatly blessed in her domestic lot, and much beloved by those who came in contact with her. The affection with which the Hunters of Crowe Hall regarded her knew neither check nor chill; while Mistress Delia Pettigrew took her young cousin to her heart in a remarkable way, after that memorable exploit at Whiteoaks in the autumn of 1715.

Mistress Delia was very proud of the feat then

performed, and of her own share in it, and was disposed, when she grew older and more garrulous, to talk rather more of these matters than was altogether discreet.

And by degrees Mistress Delia well-nigh forgot Beatrice's part in the device whereby Charles Cope's life and liberty were preserved; so that she ended by believing the triumph over Colonel Willoughby and his troop to be entirely due to her own readiness and presence of mind.

When Beatrice had been married at least three years, and the recollection of the disturbances of 'the Fifteen' was becoming somewhat less fresh and vivid in the north, a message was brought to her from foreign parts.

The bearer was an old Northumbrian yeoman, well known to have been present at the surrender of Preston, after sharing all other disasters of that most disastrous rising. He returned at length to his native place, trusting in his own obscurity for protection from penalty; and one day he waylaid young Lady Forrest, as she strolled slowly down the avenue at Drumscour, enjoying the warm summer sunshine with her baby son in her arms.

'I bear word to you, madam,' this old man said, 'from one who knows you well. I was bidden to name no names, but to say 'tis the gentleman you

once spoke with beside the gate of Whiteoaks who now sends you greeting. And I was to say to you that you spoke truth then: that the Cause you wot of is over-noble for service such as was asked of you that day. . . . The gentleman said you would understand, madam; and he prayed very fervently that the blessing of Heaven might rest upon you, for he said you have a loyal soul.'

THE END.

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